Teachers' Training Module of Inclusive Education & Girls' Education

Assembled by
District Inspector of School
(Secondary Education), Howrah
with the help of Sarva Siksha Mission, Howrah

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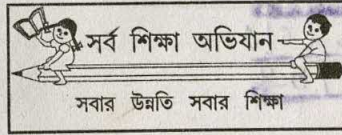
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Content

HANDBOOK ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

(For Elementary School Teachers)

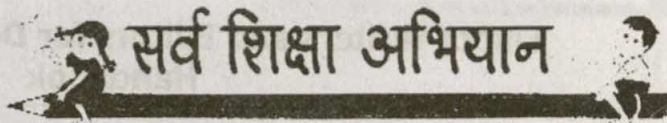
Distance Education Programme
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (DEP-SSA)

An IGNOU-MHRD, Govt. of India Project

"गुरू ज्ञान से निकला प्रकाश पुंज जीवन के प्रति हमारे दृष्टिकोण और व्यक्तित्व के विकास की राह को रोशन करता है।"

– डॉ. सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन

"The teacher gives the spark which will enable you to develop a new outlook on life and new kind of being."

– Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

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HANDBOOK ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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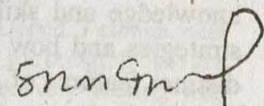
I express my gratitude to the Department of Elementary Education &Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India in sponsoring DEP-SSA to strengthen and support in-service teacher training at elementary stage. I am indebted to Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU and Chairman Advisory Committee (DEP-SSA) and Prof. S.C. Garg Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, for providing continued guidance and support for bringing out this Handbook.

I am highly grateful to Dr. Manoj Kumar, Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities M/o Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India and Dr. J.P. Singh, Member Secretary, Rehabilitation Council of India, M/o Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India for their guidance and contributing Foreword and Preface respectively to the Handbook.

I am thankful to the resource persons and participants of the workshop, who develop the chapter scheme for this Handbook. My thanks are also due to the authors and editors for writing and content editing of the units on different disabilities and on barrier free environment.

I am also very grateful to Prof. V.K. Sabharwal for language editing of the draft and provided constructive suggestion for its improvement.

I express my appreciation to Dr. Sanjay Kant Prasad, Programme Officer, who coordinated the activity and developed this Handbook. I wish to put-on record the administrative support provided by Shri Chandra Ballabh, Administrative-Cum-Finance Officer, for publishing this Handbook.

Efforts have been made to include the training needs of elementary school teachers. I am sure that the Handbook will be useful for the elementary school teachers and other functionaries for teaching the children with special needs in inclusive setup. I look forward the Constructive suggestions/feedback on the quality of the Handbook.

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21 March, 2006
New Delhi

Handbook on Inclusive Education

Introduction

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 is indeed a landmark legislation in the history of special education in India. Chapter V (Section 26) of this Act which deals inter-alia with education mentions that the appropriate government and the local authorities shall

- ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he/she attains the age of 18 years; and
- endeavour to promote integration of students with disabilities in the normal school.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a mission mode nationwide campaign, endeavours to provide eight years of quality education to all children in the 6-14 years age group. The objectives of SSA mainly focus on increasing access, enrolment and retention of all children as well as improving the quality of education they receive. The objectives of SSA can be realized only if children with special needs (CWSN) are also included in mainstream elementary education. In view of the importance of integrating CWSN in mainstream elementary education, SSA has made ample provision for their education. SSA seeks to ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the type and the degree of his/her disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. The SSA framework caters for all children with special needs (CWSN) in a unique manner.

This Handbook has been prepared for elementary school teachers with a view to enable them to provide various interventions for CWSN recommended under the SSA framework. To start with, it describes the concept, principles and features of "inclusive education" and highlights the characteristics of "inclusive schools." Besides, multi-optional models for education the recent legislation on inclusive education have also been discussed. This Handbook deals with various types of disability viz, hearing impairment, visual impairment, loco-motor impairment, mental retardation and learning disabilities. Unit 6 on learning disabilities offers a comprehensive treatment of the topic and makes this Handbook distinctly different from other books on 'inclusive education.' While developing this Handbook, it was assumed that the teacher is a key player in providing 'inclusive education' and it is he who should be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to teach CWSN of various categories. As a result, pedagogic strategies and how to use them along with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are two distinct features of this Handbook. It is hoped that the Handbook because of its focus on developing teacher competencies shall enable the elementary school teacher to understand the needs of CWSN, provide them necessary pedagogic as well as emotional support and plan remedial education on individual basis. The sections on various concessions and facilities provided by the Central and the State Governments are meant in particular for the teachers. They can help CWSN and their parents to avail themselves of these concessions and facilities.

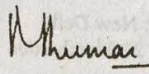
डॉ. मनोज कुमार
मुख्य आयुक्त
(नि:शक्त जन)

Dr. Manoj Kumar
Chief Commissioner
For Persons with Disabilities

सामाजिक न्याय और
अधिकारिता मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार

Ministry of Social Justice
and Empowerment
Government of India

FOREWORD

Inclusive Education is a flexible and individual support system for children with special needs. It forms an integral component of the overall educational system, and is provided in mainstream schools committed to an appropriate education for all. It recognizes and responds to the diversity of children's need and abilities including differences in their ways and pace of learning. It does so by using individualized teaching methods, adapted curricular, as well as tailor-made teaching aids and materials.

Inclusive education presupposes team work and the responsibility has to be shared by the school as a whole. But it is the teacher who provides with the support-services and therefore role to play. Thus, capacity building of teachers for imparting quality education to children with special needs should be the focal point to ensure universalisation of elementary education.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a nation wide campaign with an objective to provide elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group. It has made ample provisions for capacity building of teachers as envisaged in the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

This Handbook on Inclusive Education for elementary school teachers is a praiseworthy effort of DEP-SSA, IGNOU for capacity building of elementary school teachers for promoting inclusive education. It deals with the concepts such as screening, identification and assessment, classroom management, teaching strategy, etc. It discusses the process of preparing an individual education plan for each child with special needs, considering the type of disability of the child such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation and loco-motor disability. The unit on barrier free environment has made this Handbook unique and different from the documents available for the training of teachers in inclusive education.

I hope this Handbook will serve the objectives for which it has been developed. I complement Prof. S.V.S. Chaudhary, Project Director, DEP-SSA, IGNOU and his team for bringing out such a wonderful document to equip the elementary school teachers in effectively dealing with children with special needs.

Place : New Delhi

Date : 22nd March, 2006

(Dr. Manoj Kumar)

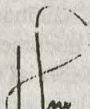
DR. J.P. SINGH
MEMBER SECRETARY

भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद्
(सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के अधीन एक संविधिक निकाय)
REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA
(A Statutory Body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment)

PREFACE

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a nation wide campaign to provide eight years of elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group. The objectives of SSA mainly focus on increasing access, enrolment and retention of all children as well as improving the quality of education. The objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can be realised only if Children with Special Needs (CWSN) could be included in the mainstream education system. SSA seeks to ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the type and degree of their disability is provided meaningful and quality education.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, a landmark legislation in the history of special education in India, stresses on access of every child with a disability to free education in an appropriate environment till they attain the age of 18 years and promoting their integration in the normal school.

To ensure the provision made under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 and Sarva Shikhsa Abhiyan, the role of teacher is very important. The teacher should have competency to impart quality education to children with disability in inclusive setup.

This Handbook is an innovative effort in developing knowledge, skills and a positive attitude within the teacher so that they could develop their competency to impart education to children with special needs by creating an inclusive environment within the classroom. The Handbook provides comprehensive information in an objective manner on the educational needs of children with various disabilities. The information on screening, identification, classroom management, teaching strategy and teaching learning material for children with visual, hearing and loco-motor impairment and mental retardation will be of great use for the teacher to practice within the classroom. The information on learning difficulties will be helpful to teachers for developing skills for dealing with the children having reading, and writing problems.

The unit on barrier free environment will be of particular use to the school management and architects so that school buildings including classrooms could be accessible and comfortable as per the needs of children with special needs.

The presentation of content in the Handbook is very learner friendly, which can be practiced by the teachers in their day-to-day teaching. In nutshell, it can be said that the Handbook caters to the objective of Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 as well as SSA with reference to orientation of teachers in Inclusive Education.

I appreciate the efforts of Prof. SVS Chaudhary, Project Director, DEP-SSA, IGNOU and his team for bringing out this document.

Place : New Delhi
Date : 21 March 2006

(J. P. Singh)

Inclusive schools should ideally provide a learner friendly environment to all learners especially the CWSN. The Unit on Barrier-Free Environment should be of particular use to the school management and the architects. Since civil work is a major provision under SSA, the significance of the unit on Barrier-Free Environment cannot be over-emphasized. Needless to say that like any other Handbook, this Handbook too caters to a set of objectives which are as under:

The Handbook for Inclusive Education will enable every elementary school teacher to:

- describe the concept of 'inclusive education' and 'inclusive schools;'
- function effectively in inclusive schools;
- provide inclusive education settings and environment;
- identify CWSN and assess the degree of disability/impairment of each such learner and develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
- understand the needs of each child with special needs and plan need-based inclusive education for him/her.
- prepare, adapt and use suitable teaching-learning material for educating CWSN;
- use and maintain aids and appliances required for teaching CWSN;
- guide parents and community about the academic and emotional support required by individual learner with special needs; and
- help CWSN and their parents become aware of various concessions and facilities for CWSN.

21 March, 2006
New Delhi

S.Prasad

Dr. Sanjay Kant Prasad
Programme Officer
DEP–SSA, IGNOU,
New Delhi

Content

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Structure of the Unit

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is based on the idea that when children grow up and learn together they also learn to live together. It is believed that this is possible only when all children in a society become students of the same school system.

This unit details the concept, meaning and importance of Inclusive Education (IE). The various models used for providing inclusion have also been described.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain the concept and meaning of inclusive education;
- describe the importance and advantages of inclusive education for students with special needs, their parents, peer groups and teachers;
- describe the characteristics of an inclusive school; and
- discuss the important legislations related to IE.

1.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: CONCEPT AND IMPORTANCE

1.3.1 Concept of Inclusion

As a teacher, you may have observed that children are different from each other. For example, some students learn slowly, while others learn fast; some need more support and guidance while learning, whereas others seem to learn on their own. You may have also observed that to enable some students to learn you need to spend more time, both inside the classroom and outside.

Thus, inclusive education (IE) refers to the act of ensuring that all children, despite their differences, receive the opportunity of being a part of the same classroom as other children of their age; and in the process get the opportunity of learning the curriculum to their optimal potential. In other words, inclusive education means that when children with different learning styles and needs study together, the teachers and the school administrators try to address the unique learning needs, interests, and style of every student through the teaching process.

Why is Inclusion Necessary?

Inclusion is necessary for three reasons:

a) Because education is essential for the development of children and to prepare them for adult life;

b) Because all children despite their disability or learning difficulty have to live in the community. An early start in mainstream playgroups or nursery schools, followed by education in mainstream i.e. general schools and colleges is the best preparation for ensuring an integrated society;

c) Because regular schools are available everywhere in all towns and large villages while special schools are mostly located in cities and large towns. Since special schools cater to a smaller number of children they are expensive and hence are usually not found in most villages and small towns. Students with special educational needs would as a result have to travel long distance to attend a school (which is usually not possible) or forego their schooling.

Definition of terms: The terms most often referred to while discussing the concept of IE are children with special needs (CWSN), integrated schools, special schools, resource rooms and resource teachers. In discussions about IE, you may also come across the term "special school."

"Special school" is the most prevalent agency for educating students with difficulties in learning. Here, students with specific disabilities are brought together and taught special academic or vocational skills. The special school may be a residential or a day school. Of late special schools have started functioning as a resource centre for a neighbour-hood or a community. For example, a special school may survey a block, identify students with a

particular disability in which they specialize and/or provide home-based education or place them in a regular school after imparting pre-integration training.

CWSN refers to all children those who require adaptations to the normal process of education due to problems of vision, hearing, movement, learning and intellect. These adaptations could be of learning material like textbooks; teaching methods; homework and other assignments given in the class, assessments and examinations. In order to meet the needs of such students, general schools need to find ways of creating conditions that can accommodate student diversity and facilitate learning for all students.

Integrated schools are schools where all children irrespective of their ability level and disability are admitted but their instruction is conducted separately. However, students from the segregated sections join regular students in non-academic and co-curricular activities such as games and sports, cultural activities etc.

Resource rooms are remedial teaching rooms which students with difficulties may be asked to attend for further tutoring on a specific topic or chapter to ensure a firm grounding in concepts and principles.

Resource teachers may be located within the same school or may visit a group of schools in proximity of each other. Thus, the resource teacher visits the class where a student with special educational needs may be either facing difficulty in keeping up with the course work or experiencing problems in learning a concept or a topic. The resource teacher provides assistance to such students within the classroom.

Exercise 1:

List at least five reasons why it is important for schools to be inclusive.

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1.3.2 Principles of Inclusion

- All school personnel should share responsibility and provide support for all students;
- The teachers should have the capacity to work within a collaborative framework to meet the unique needs of all individual students when provide adequate training and supportive services;
- The effect of disabilities on students varies from one individual to another and the implications for inclusion differ accordingly;

- Knowledge about the family and social circumstances of a child is crucial for deciding whether a child can be placed in an inclusive setting;
- Each student should have the opportunity to experience meaningful challenges, exercise choice and responsibility, interact collaboratively with others, and be actively engaged in developmental, academic non-academic, inter and interpersonal activities as part of the educational process;
- Implementation of these principles depends upon continuous community support, broad planning, training and evaluation; and
- Adaptive school environment is required to suit the needs of every child with disability.

Exercise 2

List any three principles of inclusion.

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Thus, the following have to be kept in mind if inclusion is to be defined in its appropriate perspective:

- All students in school learning together
- Schools are for everyone
- Appropriate support services
- No discrimination
- Valuing diversity

Activity 1

Discuss with a colleague each of the above aspects of defining inclusion and give two examples of each.

Inclusive schools are the most effective means of:

- Combating discriminatory attitudes
- Creating welcoming communities, and
- Achieving education for all.

But it is important that, as far as possible, students receive the support they need to learn adequately. For example, a student who is slow in learning might require more attention from the teacher or a student who has some problems in seeing might have to be seated in front close to the blackboard.

Exercise 3

Do you think that inclusive schools are effective? If yes, why?

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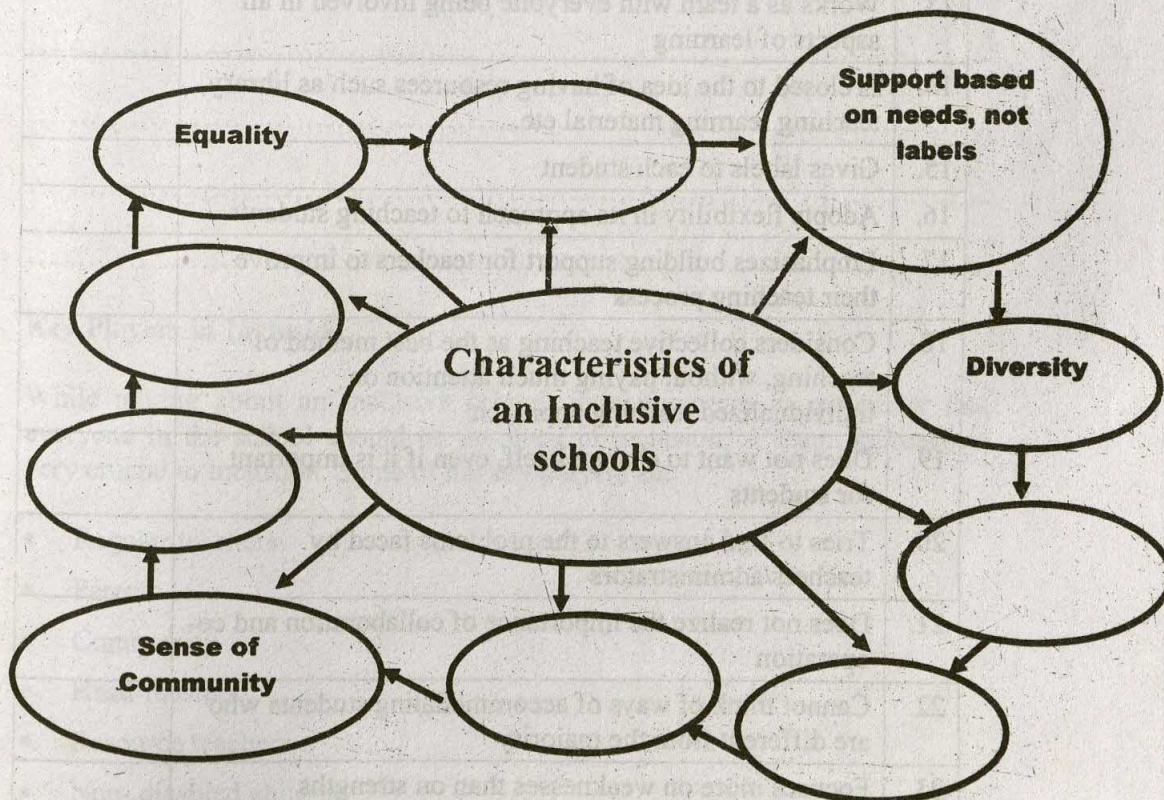
Features of an Inclusive School

Generally there are no well defined or widely agreed upon features of an inclusive school; however inclusive schools do share certain characteristics that are useful for all students. These are:

- Equality
- Sense of belongingness /membership
- Respect for each other
- Need-based support to each student
- Diversity as a desirable feature

Activity 2

Think of some more features and fill in the empty balloons in the diagram below.

Exercise 4

Carefully read the items in the following checklist and write **true (T)** or **false (F)** against the statements that make an inclusive school.

An inclusive school is one that:

Sl. No.	Statement	T /F
1.	Believes in giving admission to all children	
2.	Favours some students and does not give adequate attention to others	
3.	Values all students equally	
4.	Regularly discusses with its teachers how to teach	
5.	Ignores the idea of providing training to teachers	
6.	Rejects the thought that all children are unique	
7.	Endeavours to meet the learning needs of all students	
8.	Prefers to teach all students in the same manner without taking care of their individual needs	
9.	Involves parents as partners in the learning process	
10.	Disregards community involvement in school related activities	
11.	Does not provide appropriate support that may be needed by students	
12.	Does not consider improving access so that all children are able to come to school	
13.	Works as a team with everyone being involved in all aspects of learning	
14.	Is closed to the idea of having resources such as library, teaching learning material etc.	
15.	Gives labels to each student	
16.	Adopts flexibility in its approach to teaching students	
17.	Emphasizes building support for teachers to improve their teaching process	
18.	Considers collective teaching as the best method of teaching, without paying much attention on individualized teaching approach	
19.	Does not want to change itself, even if it is important for students	
20.	Tries to find answers to the problems faced by teachers/administrators	
21.	Does not realize the importance of collaboration and co-operation	
22.	Cannot think of ways of accommodating students who are different from the majority	
23.	Focuses more on weaknesses than on strengths	
24.	Appreciates diversity	
25.	Attempts novel initiatives in the process of its own growth	

You must have guessed by now that there are certain requirements that a school should meet in order to become an inclusive school. Let us look at these briefly.

- Some support has to be provided to students with special needs in general schools;
- The entire staff of the school need to be prepared to be involved in the process of inclusion;
- Some changes may have to be made in the school/classrooms in terms of resources, and practices;
- Schools need to be made barrier-free; and
- Teachers have to be trained and equipped to interact with and teach CWSN.

Activity 3

Form a group of teachers of your school and discuss some additional factors that may be important to prepare schools for inclusion. List these below:

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Key Players in Inclusion

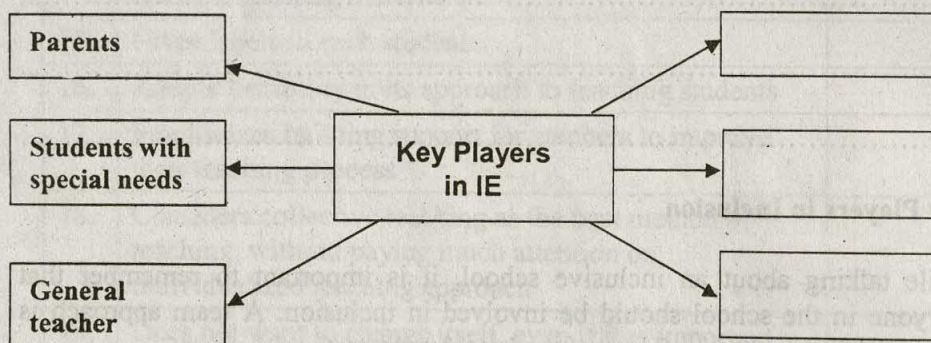
While talking about an inclusive school, it is important to remember that everyone in the school should be involved in inclusion. A team approach is very crucial to inclusion. Some of the key players are:

- Regular teachers
- Parents
- Community
- Head-masters
- Resource teachers
- Non- disabled children
- CWSN
- Local Education Authorities like Block Education Officers, District Education Officers

Activity 4

Match the statement that best describes a key player:

Sl. No.	Key player	Defining feature
1.	Regular teachers	provides remedial teaching to CWSN, sometime through visit mode
2.	Parents	are open to providing admission to all children in their school
3.	Community	should have high expectations of their CWSN
4.	Head-masters	base structures like PTA/MTA to be inclusive
5.	Resource teacher	require training to teach CWSN
6.	Non- disabled peers	support the idea of an inclusive school
7.	CWSN	are exposed to the needs of differently-abled children
8.	Local Education Authorities	benefit by attending a regular school

Can you think of some more key players and fill in the boxes provided below:

1.3.3 Importance and Need of Inclusive Education

The Government of India is fully committed to the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). To facilitate UEE, the Parliament passed the 86th Amendment of the Constitution, making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6-14 years through inclusion of the new Article 21A in Part III of the Constitution, as follows:

> *'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.*

This Amendment has given a new thrust to the education of CWSN, as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE cannot be achieved. Hence, if Education for All is to be achieved, CWSN would have to be provided education.

1.4 ADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Now let us turn our attention to how inclusive education is beneficial for all those involved in it.

Children

- All children are enriched.
- IE promotes positive attitudes on the part of non-disabled students towards CWSN.

General Teachers

- Professional skills are enhanced.
- Function as change agents and establish rapport with all children.
- Promote peer sensitization
- View each child as an opportunity to grow professionally.

Parents

- Become aware of the rights of their CWSN.
- Become aware of the services available for CWSN.
- Become better equipped to deal with their children psychologically and in a positive manner.

CWSN

- Prepare themselves for independent living.
- Develop enhanced self-confidence/esteem.
- Realize their potential considerably.

Exercise 5

Can you think of some other groups who may benefit from inclusion? List them and describe how they may benefit.

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1.5 MULTI OPTION MODEL (MOM)

1.5.1 Defining MOM

The needs of the child with disabilities may vary considerably depending on the nature and extent of the disability or impairment, socio-economic background, attitude of the family and the educational services available in the area. Thus, it is important to educate a child with special needs in an environment most appropriate to his/her learning general needs. Besides, i.e., regular schools, a variety of options are available to meet the specific needs of a child with disabilities. These might include special schools, Education Guarantee Scheme, or even home-based education. This section briefly describes the most common models used to reach out to and educate children with special needs.

1.5.2 Models of Inclusive Education

The development of the "Integrated school" was the first step towards the concept of Inclusive Education, and away from the concept of special segregated schools. The approach was to bring the special school within the precincts of the regular school and all children so admitted could:

- identify themselves as a part of the same academic institution;
- avail themselves of the same network of resources in the same geographical area; and
- use the opportunity of interacting with normal students as equals and peers.

Resource Rooms

This is a common model used in integrated or inclusive settings. The resource room is equipped with the basic appliances needed for educating usually single-category children, i.e. children with a particular disability. Wherever the child is unable to comprehend the lesson in a regular classroom, he/she is taken to the resource room and a skilled teacher provides remedial tutoring. One or two examples will illustrate this point.

A visually impaired student may not be able to read the teacher writing from the blackboard, when she teaches mathematics. He/She may be taken to the resource room and taught the use of pertinent equipment and explained how to solve a particular type of problem. Similarly, a hearing impaired student may not be fully able to comprehend a language lesson. He/She may be taken to a resource room, where using visual aids and sign language, the resource teacher may explain to the student the concept or words he / she could not grasp in the regular classroom.

The main disadvantage of this approach is that the student is partially segregated. The regular teacher is not always prepared to assume full responsibility of teaching students with special needs. Moreover, the resource room model is not cost-effective, as every school is required to have a resource room.

The resource room can be used for the following:

- Keeping some basic equipment;
- Providing additional help to a student with a special need by a resource or a regular teacher, whenever required;
- Enabling the resource teacher and the general teacher to jointly solve problems; and
- Preparation of teaching learning material by the resource teacher.

Resource Teachers

A resource teacher is a teacher specially trained to teach CWSN. Generally a resource teacher provides remedial teaching to a student with a special need and guides a general teacher. He/She can either be attached to a school or function in an itinerant, i.e. visit mode. The itinerant model is usually used in rural areas where the population of students with special needs is widely scattered. The resource teachers then would have to be on the move and visit all the schools in the block giving special educational inputs to the students with special needs and orienting regular teachers as well.

The following are the major roles of a resource teacher:

- Conducting functional assessment of CWSN;
- Using and instructing how to use aids and appliances;
- Preparing suitable teaching learning material;
- Suggesting curricular adaptations wherever required;
- Making important suggestions and recommendations;
- Modifying academic assignments whenever necessary;
- Co-teaching, i.e., team teaching classes in general;
- Providing on the spot tutoring;
- Providing remedial teaching;
- Designing need-specific teaching activities;
- Preparing individual educational plans;
- Monitoring regularly;
- Collaborating with general teacher on a regular basis;
- Sensitizing peers;
- Counselling parents; and
- Mobilizing the community.

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1.6 EDUCATION FOR ALL

1.6.1 Education Guarantee Scheme

EGS centres are these days increasingly being used for children who for some reason cannot make it to the formal school system. Hence, the learning environment at EGS centres is so designed as to be more accessible to children, who have social or economic compulsions. These may include working children, street children, tribal children and also children with special needs. The timings are made flexible and competent people look after these centres. If children with special needs attend EGS centre, they would need to be provided support services either by developing a learning corner or engaging an itinerant resource teacher or through remedial teaching before or after the normal running hours of EGS centre.

1.6.2 Home-based Education

Chapter V of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 also provides the facility of home-based education for severely disabled children. Instead of the child going to the school, the school comes to the child. The services of retired teachers, headmasters, postmasters and local educated unemployed youth could be used after orientating them to the techniques of special education. This approach aims to meet the special educational needs of one of the most neglected sections of children.

Further, resource teachers, as a part of their job, visit the homes of children with special needs to impart pre-integration training, counsel parents and provide vocational education. The main aim is to prepare a child with special needs for independent living.

The National Trust also trains caregivers to provide education to severely disabled children through NGOs in every State.

Exercise 6

Which one according to you is the most useful model for educating CWSN and why?

....

....

....

....

....

....

1.7 LEGISLATION AND INCLUSION

There are three major Acts that deal with disability in this country. These are:

- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act 1992
- Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995
- National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act 1999

1.7.1 Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act, 1992

The Government of India set up Rehabilitation Council, as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Thereafter, this was converted to a statutory body under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992. The Rehabilitation Council of India is a statutory body under MoSJ&E set up with the twin responsibilities of standardizing and regulating the training of

personnel and professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education. The RCI Act was subsequently amended in 2000, to establish a statutory mechanism for monitoring and standardizing courses for the training of professionals required in the field of special education and rehabilitation of persons with disability. Training of special educators and resource teachers that can offer support services to children with special needs in regular schools is the responsibility of RCI.

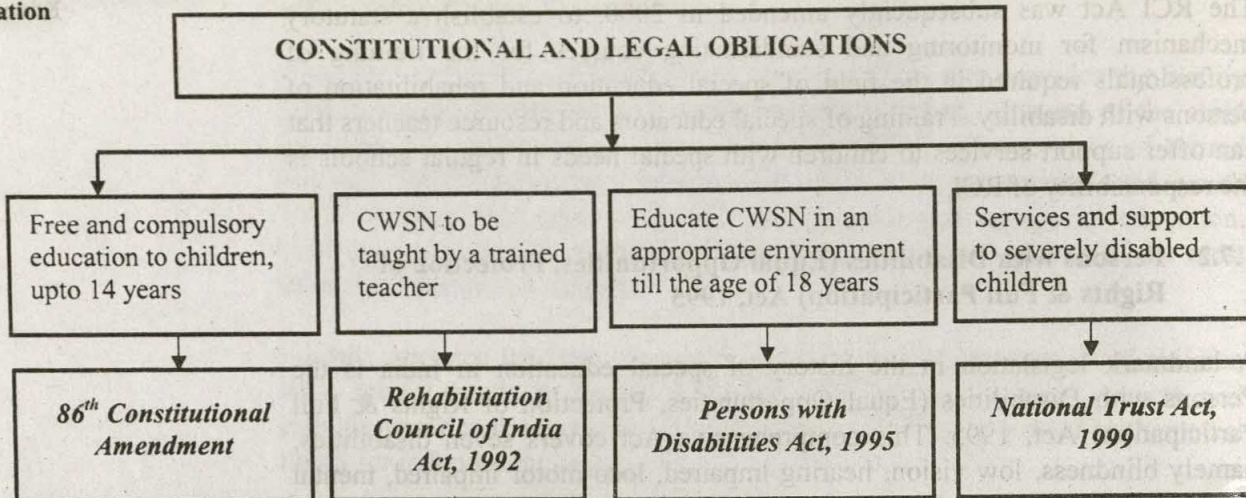
1.7.2 Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995

A landmark legislation in the history of special education in India is the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995. This comprehensive Act covers seven disabilities, namely blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, loco-motor impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness. Chapter V (Section 26) of the Act, which deals with education, mentions that the appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall:

- Ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years;
- Endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in normal schools;
- Promote setting up of special schools in government and private sectors for those in need of special education in such a manner that children with special needs living in any part of the country have access to such schools; and
- Endeavour to equip the special schools for children with special needs with vocational training facilities.

1.7.3 National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999

Another landmark legislation is the National Trust Act, 1999. This Act seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who, within the disability sector, have been even more marginalized than others. Though the National Trust Act of 1999 does not directly deal with the education of children with special needs, one of its thrust areas is to promote programmes, which foster inclusion and independence by creating barrier-free environment, developing functional skills of the disabled and promoting self-help groups.

The object of the National Trust is to empower families to retain their disabled members within the family and the community. The Trust reaches out to disabled persons and their families and provides a range of relief and care services. Such services may be provided through institutional care or in the homes in case the families and their disabled members are unable to access the services outside the house.

1.8 SUM UP

This unit deals with the concept, meaning and importance of Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education means education of all children (with or without disabilities) in regular schools. All schools have to be inclusive in their approach, use the child-centered pedagogy and become capable of meeting the needs of all children. The key principles of inclusion in the form of co-operation, collaboration, community support and parental involvement have also mentioned. The importance of inclusive education in relation to the 86th Constitutional Amendment, in the context of Universilization of Elementary Education, has also been highlighted. The three important legislations RCI Act, Persons with Disabilities Act and National Trust Act and their implications for inclusion have been briefly dealt with in this unit. It can be said that inclusive education provides equal opportunity of learning to all children with necessary need-based support services.

1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Select three words from the following by marking (√) that define inclusion

   - Discrimination
   - Child-centered
   - Learning for some
   - Appropriate supports
   - Labelling
   - Friendships

2. Define Inclusive Education?

   ....

   ....

   ....

3. Fill in the blanks

   i. 86th Constitutional Amendment deals with ________________.

   ii. Parental ________________ is important for inclusion.

   iii. Inclusion means appreciating ________________ in a classroom.

   iv. RCI Act deals with trained ________________ for CWSN.

   v. PWD Act, 1985 suggests a ______________ model for educating CWSN.

1.10 FURTHER READING

- Inclusive Education. Strategies for Including Children with Disabilities in the Regular Classroom, (1977). The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu. Centre for Prevention, Education, Rehabilitation and Human Resource Development: Madras, India.

- Puri and Abraham (Eds.): Handbook of Inclusive Education for Educators, Administrators and Planners, (New Delhi: Sage Publications), 2004.

UNIT 2 HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Structure of the Unit

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will provide you a broad overview of concept and definition of hearing impairment and its special education needs. The identification and assessment of hearing impaired children has been explained in very objective terms. Besides, teaching strategies, this unit deals with aids and appliances meant for hearing impaired learners along with teaching-learning material.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain the concept/meaning of hearing impairment;
- identify and assess the hearing impaired child; and
- deal with a hearing impaired child in the classroom using specific teaching strategies.

2.3 DEFINITIONS

Hearing: Hearing is a process of detection, discrimination, recognition and comprehension of sounds.

Hearing impairment: Hearing Impairment may be defined as any deviation or change for the worse in either auditory structure or auditory function. This may involve any defect in the hearing process due to hereditary or environmental factors. Owing to this impairment the child can't use his hearing for ordinary purpose.

Hearing disability: Hearing disability is defined as the auditory problem experienced and complained about by the individual. When the impairment reduces the child's functional potential and restricts his level of performance, it becomes a disability.

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, describes hearing disability as a loss of sixty decibels or more in the better ear in the conversational range of frequencies for the purpose of concession and facilities available for persons with this disability in India.

Hearing handicap: Hearing handicap is the disadvantage for an individual resulting from impairment or a disability, which limits or prevents the fulfillment of a normal role depending on age, sex, and social and cultural factors for the individual. The restriction imposed upon, or acquired by the child affects the efficiency of his / her day-to-day life.

Example

1. A defect in the eardrum is impairment. It distorts the process of sound vibration and restricts the normal process of vibration and transfer of the message to the middle ear.
2. This distortion creates a disability in hearing and child cannot perform the normal process of hearing sounds.
3. This is a disadvantage resulting in the loss of quality of life.

2.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

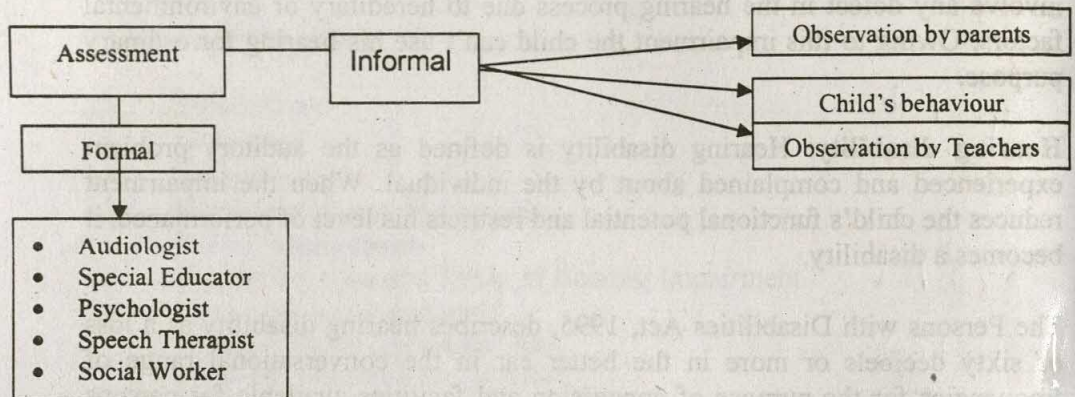
The child with hearing impairment can be identified with the help of the following methods:

During childhood it can be identified through the following symptoms:

- History of high risk factors.
- Absence of normal response to various sounds.
- Language development not seen even after one to two year of age.
- Attention on the lips of the speaker.
- Liquid discharge from ears.
- Constant itch in the child's ear.

Hearing impairment at classroom level can be identified through:

- Lack of linguistic skills, normal for one's age.
- Difficulty in comprehension.
- Specific problem in reading and speaking.
- Slow mastering of language skills.
- Asking for repetition frequently.

Assessment: This can be done in two ways to know the degree and type of hearing loss:

The child showing one or more than one of the above mentioned signs should be referred to an audiologist. He assesses the hearing loss using various audiological equipment like pure tone audiometer, speech audiometer, play audiometer, sound field audiometer, impedance audiometer, Brain Evoked Response Audiometry, etc. It is now possible to assess degree and type of hearing loss at an early age of the child.

2.4.1 Common Characteristics

A child with hearing impairment

- turns his/her head to one side in order to hear better;
- is unable to follow directions;
- focuses specially on speaker's lips;
- generally requests the teacher to repeat instructions, questions etc.;
- hesitates to participate in group discussions;
- lacks coordination between hearing and seeing capabilities; and
- may have show discharge from the ears.

2.5 CAUSES, SEVERITY AND TYPES OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT

The causes of hearing impairment can occur before birth, during birth or after birth. The causes before birth may concern family history of childhood deafness, consanguineous marriages, illness during pregnancy, history of mother suffering from rubella during pregnancy and poor physical condition of the mother. The possible causes during birth are premature delivery, lack of oxygen during birth, absence of birth cry and low birth weight, i.e., less than 1200gms. The causes after birth are deformities of ear, nose, face and throat; infectious diseases (mumps, measles, meningitis, viral fever etc); injury to ear, exposure to loud sound and neglected ear discharge. Children with the above factors may be considered as high-risk children and their hearing assessment should be done as early as possible.

The higher the level of hearing sensitivity, the greater the severity of hearing loss. Hearing loss may be mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe or profound:

- Mild hearing loss (26 to 40 dB HL): A child with mild hearing loss will have trouble hearing and understanding soft speech in a noisy background.
- Moderate hearing loss (41 to 55 dB HL): A child with moderate hearing loss will have difficulty in hearing conversational speech.
- Moderately severe hearing loss (56 to 70 dB HL): A child with moderately severe hearing loss will have difficulty in hearing conversational speech even at close distances.
- Severe hearing loss (71 to 90 dB HL): A child with severe hearing loss may only hear loud environmental sounds.
- Profound hearing loss (91 dB HL and above): A child with profound hearing loss may only hear very loud environmental sounds.

The ear

It is the sense organ of hearing. It is mainly divided into three parts: (a) Outer ear, (b) Middle ear, and (c) Inner ear. The sound waves from the environment including speech enter the outer ear, strike on the eardrum, and make the tiny three bones in the middle ear vibrate. This results into the transfer of mechanical energy in the middle ear into electrical energy in the inner ear. Frequency and intensity analysis of sounds takes place in the inner ear. The electrical energy from the inner ear is carried to hearing area in the brain through auditory nerve and other complex auditory pathways for processing and interpretation of the meaning of the sounds.

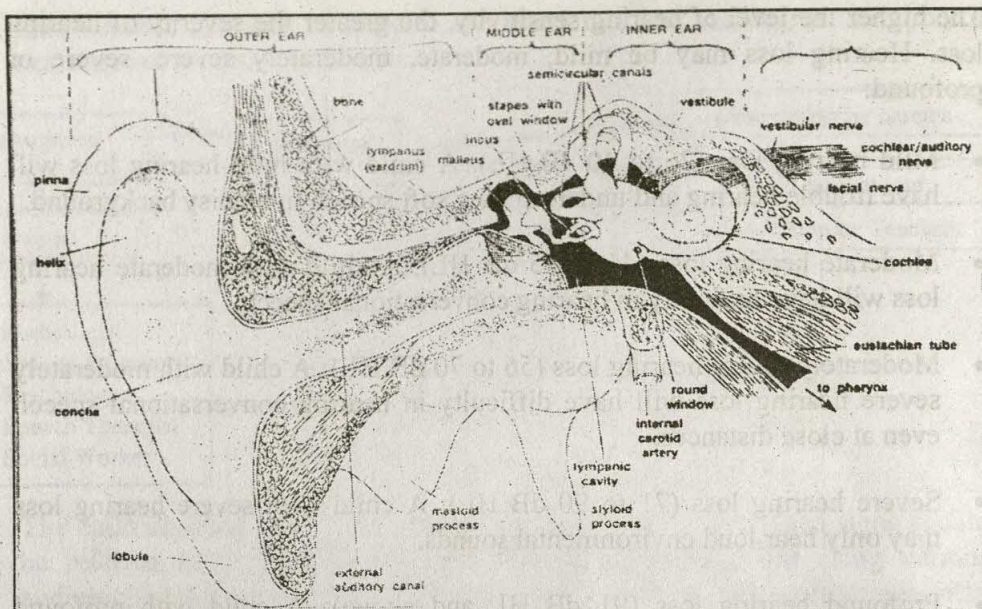
The hearing loss can occur due to damage at any place in different parts of ear. The types of hearing loss are as follows:

i) *Conductive hearing loss:* Hearing loss due to any problem in the outer ear and/or middle ear can lead to conductive hearing loss.

ii) *Sensory neural hearing loss:* Hearing loss due to any problem in the inner ear and / or VIII nerve is termed as sensori-neural hearing loss.

iii) *Mixed hearing loss:* Hearing loss due to any problem in the outer and /or middle ear and inner ear is termed as mixed hearing loss.

iv) *Central hearing loss:* The hearing loss due to defects in central auditory processing is termed as central hearing loss. The child can hear the sound but has problem in understanding and interpreting the speech and language.

v) *Functional hearing loss:* This is hearing loss when there is no anatomical and physiological abnormality in the auditory system but the child has problem in hearing due to malingering or psychological problems.

Support service

The most important form of support service required by a hearing impaired child is speech and language training by a speech therapist. The language of this child also needs to be stimulated both by parents and the teacher.

Besides, a hearing impaired child might also require the following:

- Acceptance of the disability by others.
- Right type of hearing aid.
- Proper use and maintenance of hearing aid.
- Right ear mould fitting.
- Speech training.
- Language development.
- Congenial and language stimulating environment.
- Positive attitude.

2.6 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

For the inclusion of a hearing impaired child in a normal classroom, certain points should be kept in mind. These points include position of a teacher, noise reduction inside the classroom, seating arrangement, location of the classroom, teaching strategies and teaching-learning material. Let us have a brief look at these points.

2.6.1 Position of the Teacher and the Child

- The distance between the child with hearing impairment and the teacher should not be more than 3 to 4 feet.

- The teacher must avoid moving too much while speaking so that the child can see his/her face.

- The teacher's face should always be in sufficient light to enable face and lip reading by the child.

2.6.2 Noise Reduction inside the Classroom

The school can make an effort to reduce unnecessary noise by carpeting floors, draping windows and covering walls with materials that absorb noise. If this is not possible then rubber pegs should be used under the table and chairs legs. All electric equipment in the classroom such as fans, tube lights, etc. should work without making any noise.

When answering or asking any question, a student should be asked to come in front so that the hearing impaired child can also participate and learn.

2.6.3 Seating Arrangements

For hearing impaired children, seating arrangement should be carefully planned keeping in view the teacher's visibility and audibility of his speech.

Seating according to visibility factors

- The child should be seated in the front to allow accurate reading of teacher's facial expressions to understand better.

- The learner's chair or desk can be turned slightly so that he can see the faces of his classmates. He should be seated in such a way that he can read the blackboard clearly. He should be seated in a place from where the reflection of light does not distract him from reading the blackboard writing.

Seating according to audibility factors:

- The child should be seated away from windows, doors etc. through which noise enters the classroom. He/She should be seated that his/her better ear is towards the teacher.

2.6.4 Location of the Classroom

- The classroom should preferably be located in the inner area of the school, away from all sources of noise due to movement such as the office, auditorium, road traffic etc.
- It should also not be located near the boundary of the school where the traffic noises are maximal.
- If possible, there should be a number of trees and plants outside the classroom to absorb noise.

2.7 TEACHING STRATEGIES

It needs to be understood that these children might not be able to understand and learn as quickly as normal children due to their hearing impairment. Hence, inclusion of a hearing impaired child might require extra effort to teach with the help of special techniques. These techniques include simple ways such as learning through story telling, direct activities, visit to educational places, description through pictures etc.

While teaching any subject use objects which are easily available for instance in mathematics, use matchsticks etc. for teaching addition and subtraction. The teaching strategies used will also depend upon whether the hearing impaired child has acquired language or not.

Teaching words

Skill	Behaviour	Objectives	Current level	Procedure	Materials
Reading and writing of words. Two-letter words. Three-letter words.	Takes interest in studies. His handwriting is very good.	When pictures are shown, he will reply and will be able to match the pictures with the name and also read the name.	The child reads and utters simple bilabial words — Papa, Baba, Aam	• Show some pictures with its name till he/she tries to read properly. • Pronunciation of words. Bu + S = Bus Gha + R = Ghar • Identification of words with pictures. • Matching words and picture. • Write the name. Same procedure will be followed for three letter words. M+T+R = Matar Matching ----- Identification ---→----- Complete the words	Flash cards, pictures, charts, black board

Teaching the concept of money

Task	Objective	Material	Procedure	Behaviour/ Response of the child	Outcome
Recognition of two sides of a coin	Identification	Purse, a coin of one rupee	Demonstration of tossing a one-rupee coin	To participate in the game, the child will look at the pictures on the coin.	Learns the game very quickly.

Various pictures of different coins	A close look at all the pictures and figures, identify and name the pictures.	A plate with coins of Rs. 1 A bowl of few rupee coins.	Put all the coins with head facing upwards — A picture of Ashok Stambh	The child will do it willingly and explore more on his own.	Learning; masters the skill through regular practice.
Note: The child will be reassessed through activity No. 1 and 2. *Assessment Report:* He is a little confused about the pictures of one-rupee and two-rupee coins.					
Difference between coin of Rs. 1 & 2	Recognition of coins of Rs. 1 & 2	Coins in 2 bowls	*Activity* • Sorting Activity of coins • Putting coins of one-rupee and two rupees in separate bowls	The child will put coins of Rs.1 & 2 in separate bowls.	Masters the skill and shows interest.
Counting coins	Concept of "how many"?	Coins of Rs. 1, 2 and 5, Number card, wrappers of ice cream and chocolate bars.	• Count the coins and write the figure. • Match with the No. card • **Real Chocolate price on wrapper** • Count cost in rupees	The Child takes interest and new challenges will make him actively participate in the activity.	Objectives will be achieved.

Methods of Communication

- *Oral/auditory-Oral method:* In this method, the child is taught to make maximum use of his/her hearing through amplification (hearing aids). It also stresses the use of speech reading to aid the child's communication. Use of any form of manual communication (sign language) is not encouraged although natural gestures may be used.

- *Auditory-verbal uni-sensory method:* This method emphasizes maximum use of auditory skills. The child is taught to develop listening skills through one-on-one that focuses attention on use of remaining hearing with the aid of amplification. In this method, no manual communication is used and the child is discouraged from relying on visual cues. This method is much useful with children with cochlear implant. The success in inclusive education through this method is very high.

- *Sign language:* Sign language is a manual language which is distinct from spoken language for communication one uses signs/gestures/actions.

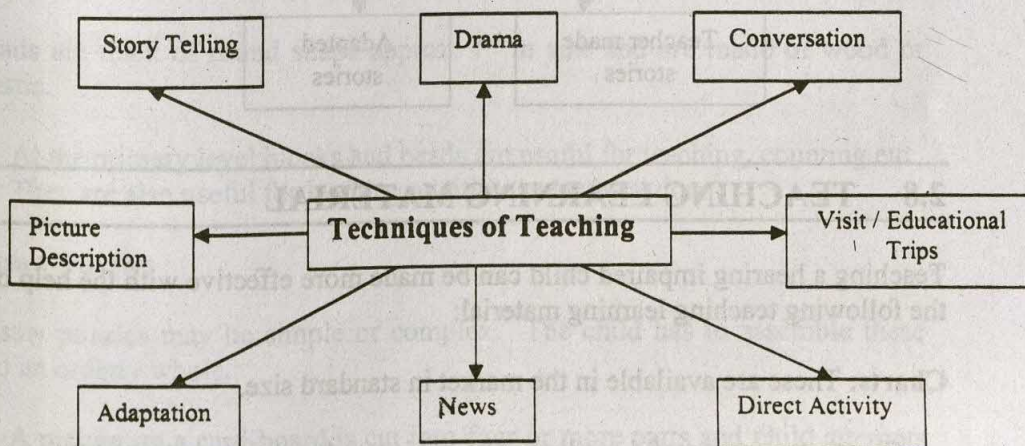
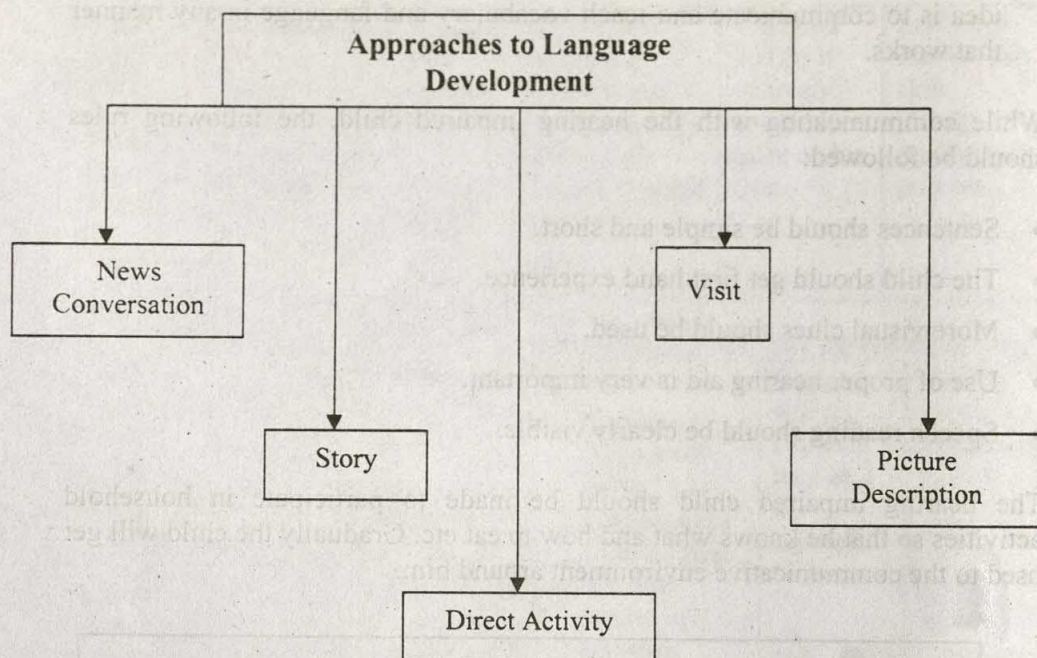
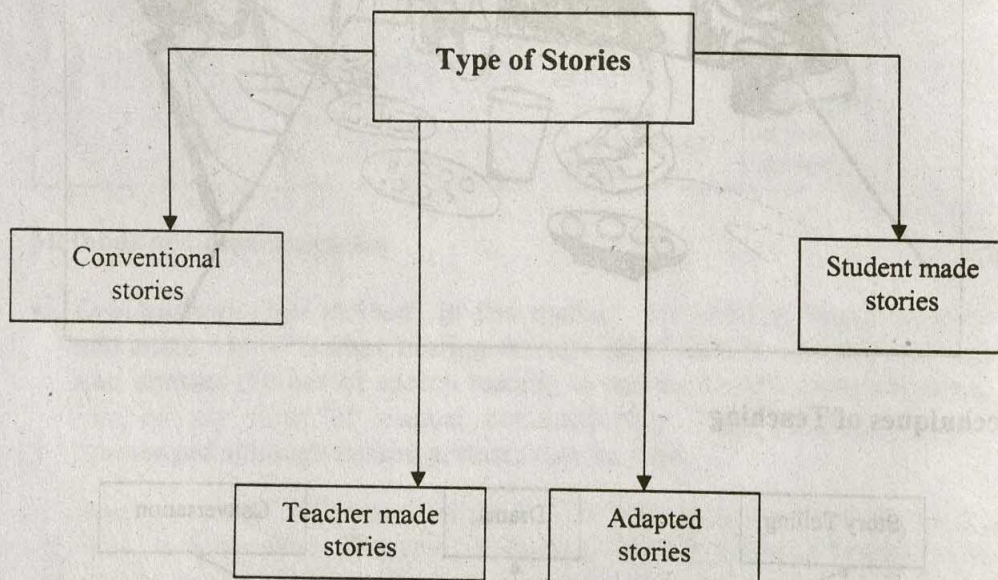
- *Total communication:* In this method, the child is exposed to a formal sign-language system, finger spelling (manual alphabet), natural gestures, speech reading, body language, oral speech and use of amplification. The

idea is to communicate and teach vocabulary and language in any manner that works.

While communicating with the hearing impaired child, the following rules should be followed:

- Sentences should be simple and short.
- The child should get first hand experience.
- More visual clues should be used.
- Use of proper hearing aid is very important.
- Speech reading should be clearly visible.

The hearing impaired child should be made to participate in household activities so that he knows what and how to eat etc. Gradually the child will get used to the communicative environment around him.

Techniques of Teaching

Story telling is a very effective method of teaching hearing impaired children as it stimulates thought processes of children by asking them what must have happened next in the story; it develops new vocabulary and strengthens the already learnt vocabulary.

2.8 TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL

Teaching a hearing impaired child can be made more effective with the help of the following teaching learning material:

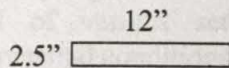
Charts: These are available in the market in standard size.

- Charts are very useful medium of teaching to hearing impaired children at all levels.

- They contain information in both written and pictorial forms.
- Teaching these children with the help of charts is creative and informative.

Written strips (size 2.5" × 12" long)

12"

2.5"

- Since written strips are not available in the market, the teacher makes these oneself from a thick chart paper.

- Written charts help present information in writing that the teacher wishes to impart to the hearing impaired child according to his/her needs.

Flash cards (3.5" × 5.5" or Postcard size)

- Flash cards are most useful at the primary level.
- A flash card contains information at the letter and the word level.
- It also contains pictures related to the letters or the words.

Sensory training equipment

- This contains objects of various shape and developing senses. For example, a pair of wooden geometrical shapes in developing the sense of a pouch can be used for touch.
- The child feels it and takes out another object of identical shape by touching it.

Story books / pictorial books

- These can help to expand the vocabulary of the hearing impaired child and for practicing writing skills and for learning language in general.

Blocks

These are cubical in shape and are made of wood or plastic.

Beads

Beads are thick of round shape approx. 1" in size and are made of wood or plastic.

- At the primary level blocks and beads are useful for teaching, counting etc.
- They are also useful for learning addition and subtraction.

Jigsaw Puzzles

Jigsaw puzzles may be simple or complex. The child has to assemble these into an orderly whole.

- A picture on a card-board is cut into four or more parts and child attempts to join these together to complete the picture.
- The level of complexity increases as the child progresses to the next class.

Pictures

- Various objects such as fruits, vegetable, furniture, clothes, means of transport etc. are shown on the chart without their names for matching.

Globes / Maps

- These are useful in higher classes to make the child aware of the locations of different countries, oceans, etc.

Models

- Commonly used models are of fruits, vegetables, various means of transport, furniture etc. and are made of plastic, wood or clay. Scientific models e.g. of the solar system, volcano, formation of rivers etc. are made of plastic.

2.9 AIDS AND APPLIANCES

A hearing aid is the basic aid required by a hearing-impaired child. It is a device that amplifies sound many times to enable a hearing-impaired child to hear words or phrases fully or partially. One model and type of hearing aid may not be suitable for all hearing impaired children. Selection and fitting of hearing aids depends upon the degree and type of hearing loss as well as the individual differences.

2.9.1 Hearing Aids

There are two types of hearing aids:

i) Individual hearing aids; and
ii) Group hearing aids.

Individual hearing aids include the followings:

Body-worn hearing aid

This is worn around the chest, about 10 inches below the child's mouth. The hearing aid should not be worn under clothes. Some body-worn aids are fitted with a cover to prevent the microphone from getting clogged by food and dirt. The cover does not affect the efficiency of the aid. The hearing aid must be used with custom-made ear moulds and harness.

Post-aural hearing aid

This is worn behind the ears. It has the advantage of receiving the sounds directly at the level of ears. It also helps in ascertaining the direction of sounds which is important feature of communication. It is light and very easily accepted by the children in inclusive education classrooms.

There are other types of individual hearing aids also namely **"In the ear"**, **"In the canal"** and **"Completely in the canal"**. They are less powerful and can

only be used with children with mild or moderate hearing loss. However, they are costly.

The individual hearing aids may work on analogue, programmable and completely digital technology. The digital hearing aids are very good for finer control of various settings in hearing aids and listening in various environmental conditions. However, they are very costly.

Under the ADIP scheme of the Government of India, various types of body level hearing aids are distributed with 100% or 50% subsidy to the children whose parents are poor.

2.9.2 Fitting of Hearing Aids

There are three types of fitting of hearing aids. When the child is fitted with one hearing aid in one ear, it is called **mono-aural** fitting. In **pseudo-binaural** fitting, the child is fitted with one body-worn hearing aid with a cord attached to two receivers, one for each ear. In **binaural fitting,** the child uses two separate hearing aids each for one ear. If hearing loss is approximately equal in both ears, binaural fitting of hearing aids is better. It has the advantage of summation of loudness of about 10 dB and for localization of sounds.

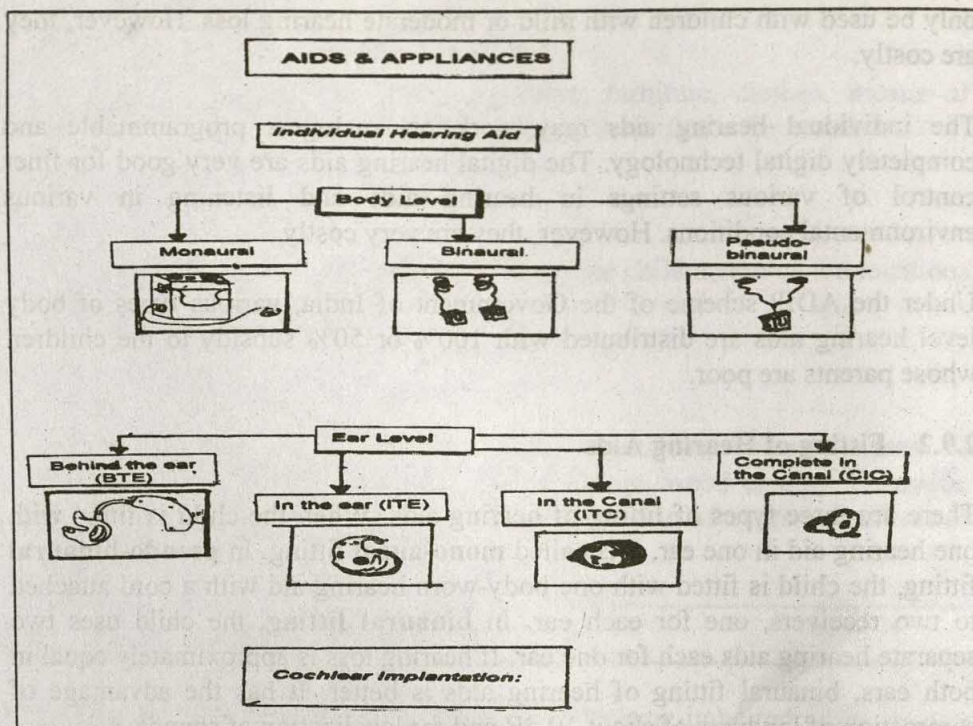
There are AC and BC hearing aids. When a receiver with ear mould is used with the hearing aid, it is called AC hearing aid and when bone vibrator with headband is used with the hearing aid, it is called BC hearing aid. BC hearing aid is very useful when the child with hearing loss has recurrent ear discharge or absence of pinna or when the external auditory canal is closed.

2.9.3 Group Hearing Aids

Hard wire system: This has a microphone and an earphone on each table. A number of children can simultaneously hear what the teacher speaks in the teacher's microphone or when other children speak.

Loop induction system: In this system, the hearing impaired child hears the teacher irrespective of the distance and with same loudness anywhere in the classroom. It is very much useful for hearing-impaired child in the inclusive education classrooms.

Radio aids/ FM system: In this system, the children can use the FM hearing aid at home, in the classroom, in the playground and at other places without any disturbance and there is no distance effect on the loudness of the sound received by the child in the hearing aid. This system is a costly one.

Cochlear implant: This is the latest technological development in hearing science. After the cochlear implant, hearing sensitivity may be almost fully restored and the child may hear like any other normal child. However, auditory verbal therapy is required for speech and language development. The child may be admitted in inclusive education system after cochlear implant.

2.9.4 Use and Maintenance of Hearing Aids

Duration of use

- All the time, except while sleeping and taking bath.

Hearing aid care

- Hearing aid should be kept in a cool and dry place.
- It should not be exposed to extreme temperatures and moisture.
- It should not be handled carelessly.
- Care must be taken while switching it off and on.
- Appropriate battery must be used.
- Remove the battery when the aid is not in use.
- Use of harness is important.
- No cloth should cover the microphone.
- Ear moulds should be washed and cleaned regularly.
- Avoid moisture in the ear moulds.
- Keep the ear moulds away from physical damage.

Common Faults of Hearing Aids

- No sound from the aid.
- Feedback or whistling sound from the aid.
- Weak sound from the aid.
- Distortion in sound.
- Intermittent sound.
- In all such cases, one should consult an audiologist.

Checking of hearing aids

- It is essential for the teacher to check the hearing aid every morning to find out whether it is working properly.
- The teacher must ensure that the hearing aid gives clear and noise-free output.

2.10 INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) for the hearing impaired includes:

- A statement of present educational performance of the child.
- A statement of annual goals including short-term objectives.
- A statement of the specific educational services to be provided to the child.

IEP is a written schedule for determining on annual basis, the instructional objectives being achieved.

Individual Educational Programme

Name	Gunjan Bali
Date of Birth and Age	10-09-1986 Age: 19 Years
Sex	Male
Address	Hero Bhawan, Shahadra
Class	XII
ID. No.	15336
Date of Filling IEP	
Mother tongue/language spoken at Home	Hindi/Punjabi
Significant information about the child	Gunjan's drawing & craft work is admirable.
Goals	To teach language while teaching other subjects: science, math, etc. Every lesson is a language lesson.

Teaching Strategies	• Demonstration Method • Probing • Structural Method • Multisensory approach.
Material Used	• Black paper • Plants (green) • Alcohol, Burner, Iodine
Procedure	• The child will be asked to cover the leaf of a green plant with the black paper. • After two days child will pluck that leaf and a fresh leaf also. • The child will put fresh leaf in alcohol & heat it. • The learner will test for iodine. • The same would be repeated on the other leaf.

Current Level of Functioning	*Knowledge* • The child has knowledge of plants, sun, gases, water, black paper. *Language* • He can speak sentences with only a few error and can read well. • He makes some mistakes in writing. *Speech* • His speech is quite Intelligible.
Instructional Objectives	*Concept Development Knowledge Goals* • Sun light is essential for the growth of plants. *Language Goals* • Use of why, what, who and linking new knowledge with previous knowledge
Services Required	Speech therapy and parents' Involvement

Teaching Language along with Science: An example		
Teacher	:	Who has put the black paper on the leaf?
Student	:	Me
Teacher	:	Gunjan has put the black paper on the leaf.
Teacher	:	Gunjan has covered the leaf with what?
Student	:	Black paper
Teacher	:	Gunjan has covered the leaf with black paper.
Teacher	:	Who has picked the leaf?
Student	:	Me
Teacher	:	Very good, Gunjan has picked the leaf.
Teacher	:	Now, in what material has the leaf been boiled?
Student	:	Water/Alcohol.
Teacher	:	The leaf has been boiled in alcohol.
Teacher	:	Who has put iodine on the leaf?
Student	:	You
Teacher	:	Did the leaf change its colour?
Student	:	No
Teacher	:	Why?
Teacher	:	What has happened because of covering of the leaf with black paper.
Student	:	We'll think.
Teacher	:	Close your eyes.

After Some Time

Teacher	:	Open your eyes now.
Teacher	:	Could you see anything while your eyes were closed?
Student	:	No
Teacher	:	Why couldn't you see anything?
Student	:	Our eyes were closed.
Teacher	:	As you couldn't see anything because you were covering your eyes with your hands; the black paper did not let the sunlight reach the leaf. And the leaf did not change the colour.
Teacher	:	The leaf did not have starch. The leaf did not prepare its food. For the leaf to make its food, sunlight is important.
Teacher	:	Open your eyes
Teacher	:	Can you see anything?
Student	:	No
Teacher	:	Why can't you see anything?
Student	:	Our eyes are closed.
Teacher	:	As you couldn't see anything because you were covering your eyes with your hands; the black paper did not let the sunlight reach the leaf. And the leaf did not change the colour.
Teacher	:	The leaf did not have starch. The leaf did not prepare its food. For the leaf to make its food, sunlight is important.

2.11 CONCESSIONS AND FACILITIES

Concessions and facilities can be divided into following categories:

- Educational
- Aids and appliances
- Financial
- Reservation
- Employment
- Other facilities

Educational

Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC): This is a centrally-sponsored scheme and is being implemented by the Dept. of Secondary and Higher Education under the Ministry of Human Resource Development since 1982. Under the scheme children with special needs including hearing-impaired children are integrated in regular schools. They can obtain books and stationery allowance, uniform allowance, transport allowance and equipment allowance under this scheme.

Aids and Appliances

Scheme of Assistance to the Disabled person for purchasing/fitting of Hearing Aid/Appliances (ADIP Scheme): Under Assistance to the Disabled Person Schemes, hearing aids, solar battery charger, custom made ear moulds, assistive listening devices are provided as per rules, to the children with hearing impairment at subsidized rates.

Eligibility

The hearing impaired person/child

- must be an Indian citizen of any age and sex;
- should have a monthly income not exceeding Rs. 10,000/ per month; and
- must not have received the assistance during the last 3 years for the same purpose; however, for children below 12 years of age this limit is 1 year.

Amount of Assistance

Total Income	*Amount of Assistance*
Up to Rs. 6,500/- p.m.	Free of cost (100% subsidy)
6,501 to 10,000/-	50% of the cost (50% subsidy)

Financial

1. Scholarship is given to the children by the government as per rules and according to the type of class.
2. Free bus pass facilities.
3. Railway travel concession: Indian railway grants concession of 50% in train fare to the persons with hearing disability and one escort with 50% concession.
4. Income Tax concession up to Rs. 75,000/- to the persons with hearing disability or parents of the children with hearing disability.
5. Professional tax exemption: Persons with hearing disability are exempted from payment of professional tax.

Reservation

1. Economic Assistance: Hearing disabled persons are eligible to get financial assistance/loan for self-employment from Public Sector Banks, National Handicapped Financial Development Corporation (NHFDC), State Welfare Department, Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP), Prime Minister Rojgar Yojna (PMRY) and Swarna Jayanti, Savrojgar Yojna (SJSY).
2. 1% of seats are reserved in educational and vocational Institutions at the time of admission.

3. 1% of vacancies are reserved for persons with hearing disability in all groups.

4. Reservations are provided to persons with hearing disability during allotment of gas agencies and petrol pumps.

5. 5% reservations are provided for allotment of residential plots by Delhi Development Authority.

Employment

1. Special Employment Exchanges have been established for disabled persons.

2. The upper age limit has been relaxed by ten years for applying for government jobs.

Other Facilities

1. Preference is given to the hearing disabled persons working in government sectors in allotment of government flats.

2. Parents of hearing disabled children are allowed to get transfer in the nearest place or state so that their child can get education in his/her mother tongue.

2.12 SUM UP

Hearing impairment may be defined as auditory problems experienced and complained about by individuals. It can be identified and assessed through history of high risk factors and absence of language development even after one or two years of age. At the classroom level, lack of linguistic skills and difficulty in comprehension are the main indicators. Assessment of hearing impaired child can be done by direct observation of behaviour and formal assessment with the help of audiologist, psychologist and speech therapist. On the basis of the degree of impairment, the hearing loss may be classified as mild hearing loss, moderate hearing loss, moderately severe hearing loss, severe hearing loss and profound hearing loss. In classroom management, the position of the teacher and child can play an effective role in teaching the hearing impaired child. Teaching strategies teaching the hearing impaired include simple techniques such as learning through story telling, direct activities, visit to educational places and description through pictures etc. The teaching learning material play a significant role in teaching hearing impaired children; these include charts, written strips, flash cards, sensory training equipment, story books, pictorial books, models etc. Hearing aid and its fitting in the form of mono-oral, pseudo-binaural and binaural along with group hearing aid systems are the main aids and appliances for teaching hearing impaired children. It is advised that before teaching a hearing impaired child, individual educational programme must be prepared.

2.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Activity 1

Write true or false for each of the following statements. Use 'T' for True and 'F' for False.

a) Children with hearing impairment cannot learn to speak. ( )

b) Sensori-neural hearing loss is due to defects in the inner ear. ( )

c) 1% job reservation in government organization is available to the persons with hearing disability. ( )

d) Direct activity is one of the techniques of teaching children with hearing impairment. ( )

e) Flash cards are very useful teaching learning material for development of language in a child with hearing impairment. ( )

f) Hearing impairment, hearing disability and hearing handicap are one and the same. ( )

Activity 2

Fill in the blanks with appropriate word(s).

a) ....is one of the causes of hearing loss before birth.

b) Delayed development of language even after the age of 2 year can help in identification of ....

c) .... is an instrument used for assessment of hearing loss.

d) Audiologist, special educator, psychologist, speech therapist and social worker are the members of team for rehabilitation of a ....child.

e) A child with hearing loss has problem in following the teachers ....in a classroom.

f) .... is the specialist for correction of speech and language in a hearing impaired child.

Activity 3

Let us try.

a) Make a list of children who are slow in academic performance in the class and have their hearing assessment done.

b) Identify a hearing impaired child in a village and admit in your school.

c) Teach him/her like any other child with use of hearing aid.

d) Put a hearing aid in your ear and hear the sound.

e) Make a list of common words used everyday and teach the child to learn these words.

Additional Information

Do you know that

a) 1 in every 1000 new born children is a deaf child?

b) The child with profound hearing loss can learn to speak like any other normal child?

c) Hearing loss can be assessed soon after birth?

d) A hearing aid can be used soon after assessment.

e) Job reservation is also available through Union Public Service Commission?

f) Many children with profound hearing loss are studying in normal schools in India?

g) Parents or teachers can easily identify children with high risk factors?

h) Parents and teachers have a great role in development of speech and language in a child with hearing impairment?

2.13 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 MENTAL RETARDATION

Structure of the Unit

3.1 INTRODUCTION

While dealing with children in the classroom, it has been noticed that a few among them are unable to comprehend as well as retain the lesson taught. At the same time, the others in the same group are very receptive in the classroom. In such a situation, the class teacher tries his best to make these children learn in the same environment like their other classmates. After some time it is experienced that such children have some limitations in their ability to understand. They face some problem in following instructions, retaining information and so on. This means that in certain challenging areas they need special kind of training and education. Regular follow-up is required to help such children retain information over a long time, because their level of intellectual ability may be sub-average. Such children may have mental retardation.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain the concept of mental retardation;
- classify mental retardation (MR);
- identify and assess children with mental retardation on the basis of common characteristics; and
- prepare teaching learning materials (TLM) for teaching children with mental retardation.

3.3 DEFINITION

A formal definition of Mental Retardation (MR) is "sub-average general intellectual functioning that is accompanied by significant limitations in adaptive functioning in at least two of the skill areas."

The most comprehensive definition of MR is the one given by the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR), 1992 which is as under:

> "Mental retardation refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with the related limitations in two or more of the following applicable skill areas: communication, self care, home living , social/ interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self direction, functional academic, leisure work , health and safety. Mental retardation manifests before the age of 18."

Mental retardation has many different types of etiology and may be seen as a final common pathway of various pathological processes that affect the functioning of the central nervous system.

Classification

There are different methods of classifying mental retardation. The psychological classification is one such method based on the level of intelligence. Psychological tests are administered to find out the extent of deficit in intellectual functioning. On the basis of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) mental retardation is divided into four categories:

Mental retardation	IQ range	Mental age (years)
Mild	50-70	9-12
Moderate	35-49	6-9
Severe	20-34	3-6
Profound	below 20	less than 3

Low IQ is indicative of greater damage to the brain and lesser potential for learning skills and to be independent in life. Children with low IQ require more help and supervision in carrying out the activities of their day to day life.

Generally, in the school environment, the child with mild mental retardation is considered 'educable;' child with moderate / severe retardation is considered as 'trainable' and the one with profound mental retardation is viewed as custodial. Mental retardation is not a disease or mental disorder, it is a condition.

3.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Identification of children with mental retardation may be made on the basis of common characteristics, physical features and also through checklist. The delay in development of self help skills may be assessed with the help of a checklist.

3.4.1 Common Characteristics

- Marked delay in developmental milestones such as sitting, standing, walking, talking etc.
- Clumsy gait and poor motor co-ordination
- Deficit end in social intelligence
- Inappropriate demands from strangers
- Laughing without meaning
- Grimacing
- Unnecessary shouting
- Snatching objects
- Throwing the objects
- Inappropriate eating skills
- Difficulty in language and communication
- Delayed response
- Inability to remember

Physical Features

Mentally retarded children do not have any special physical features that may help their identification except in the case of microcephaly – where the head size is relatively smaller than what is normal for the size of the body. In the case of hydrocephaly- the size of the head is larger vis-à-vis the size of the body. Down syndrome is one of the most common chromosomal disorders with mental retardation associated with varied other manifestations. A child with Down syndrome has distinct features such as slanting eyes, flat nose, flabby skin, relatively smaller fingers, flat feet and fissured tongue. A child with mental retardation has certain deficiencies in the following areas:

Self-help areas: Self help areas relate to the child's capability in eating, bathing, drinking, dressing, and undressing skills. The mentally retarded children have either ill acquired or not at all acquired skills in these areas.

Communication level: These children are not able to communicate their needs fully. They cannot initiate conversation and even if someone initiates they are not able to sustain it, as they have very little vocabulary, cannot make or understand complex sentences. Their abstract thinking and imagination too are not well developed.

Motor and mobility: These children do not have any physical disability unless it is an associated condition like cerebral palsy. But they have mobility problem in terms of gait. They have problem in fine motor activities like copying, cutting on a straight or a curved line, putting beads in a string.

Academic performance: Academic performance of a mentally retarded child is sub-verage as compared to that of other normal children of their age. It may be due to poor comprehension, poor memory, poor fine motor skills, poor reading skills and comprehension problems of visual and auditory perception and inappropriate behaviour.

Memory: Poor memory is a major hindrance in their academic performance. Due to this, most of the information is not retained by them even for a short time.

Informal: Before the start of any intervention, assessment of an MR child for an activity or skills is essential in order to arrive at a decision. For the benefit of the teachers, some of the developmental milestones are mentioned below:

Sequence of motor development

Social Smile (in response to mother's smile)	:	3 months
Thumb sucking	:	1 month
Holding the head up	:	1 month
In prone position	:	1 month
In supine position	:	4 months

Turning

From side to back	:	2 months
From back to side	:	4 months
Complete	:	6 months
Reach and grasp	:	4 months
Grasp and hold	:	5 months

Sitting

With support	:	5 months
Without support	:	9 months

Standing

Standing with support	:	8 months
Standing without support	:	11 months
Walking with support	:	11 months
Walking without support	:	12 months

Elimination

Bowel control	:	2 years
Bladder control	:	2 to 4 years

Language acquisition

Reflexive utterances (crying and comfort)	:	0 to 3 months
Babbling	:	3 to 8 months
Adding intonation to this babbling	:	8 to 10 months
First words	:	1 to 1 ½ years
Two word sentences	:	around 18 months
Developing sentences structure (3 to 4 words)	:	around 2 years.

Vocabulary Growth (For a Normal Child)

Age (in months)	*No. of words*
8	0
9	1
12	3
15	19
18	22
21	81
24	272
30	446
36	896
48	1540
60	2971

3.4.2 Functional Assessment

For the benefit of the teacher working in mainstreamed school, a sample of Functional Assessment, Checklist and some of its provisions are explained below to help them understand the extent of problems and how to go about it. Functional Assessment Checklist for Programming (FACP) is an activity-based checklist used by the teacher for assessment and programming of children with mental retardation. The activities listed in the checklist are easy to understand, necessary for daily living, easily observable, age appropriate as far as possible. They contribute a great deal to living independently in the community.

Grouping of students

The checklist covers content for various groups namely pre-primary, primary-I primary-II, secondary, pre-vocational-I, pre-vocational-II, and care group. The grouping is based on ability and chronological age of the children, keeping the principle of zone reject in mind and the school going age i.e., and 3 to 18 years.

Pre-primary: This group consists of children between 3-6 years of age. The coverage of content is in personal, social and academic areas.

Primary-I: Students who achieve 80% on the items in pre-primary checklist are promoted to primary-I level and the age of the student joining this class may be 7 years approximately. In some cases, the student may continue for one more year in pre-primary to fulfil the pass criteria (For example, if a student who is 7 years has achieved about 60% on evaluation on pre-primary checklist, he may continue in the same class for a longer time, join the primary class and only he/she can achieve the pass criterion i.e. 80%).

Primary-II: Students who do not achieve 80% on the items in the checklist in pre-primary level even after 8 years of age are placed in primary-II. Presumably these are children with low functioning abilities.

Secondary group

This group includes students between 11-14 years. This is a mixed group (i.e. students promoted from both primary I and II. On achieving 80% of the items in this class including the items in academic area, the student is promoted to pre-vocational-I and those who achieve less than 80% are promoted to pre-vocational-II.

Pre-vocational I and II: Both the groups consist of students in the age group 15-18 years. The primary focus of training is to prepare students in basic work skills and domestic activities. Hence the major content covered in the checklist is in the areas of occupational, social and academic areas. However the content coverage under academic area will be minimal or need based for prevocational-II group of students.

3.5 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

School is an institution where a student is gradually shaped into a person and develops more of those qualities and capabilities which enhance his/her

competency. His/ her negative traits are modified so that they become somewhat more acceptable.

We should remember that two aspects of school are very important; the first is its physical structure and the second its teachers. Although we do not need to make very drastic changes in the design of the school for Mentally Retarded children, we should pay extra attention to the following:

3.5.1 Position of the Teacher

While teaching children with mental retardation, the teacher should pay proper attention to each child. It is advised that the child should be seated closer to the teacher so that the teacher can supervise his/her work and also observe the child.

3.5.2 Seating Arrangement

Instead of the usual row-based seating arrangement, we should have "U" type seating arrangement for children with mental retardation so that each one of them can be easily observed by the teacher.

3.6 TEACHING STRATEGIES

The usual guidelines for facilitating learning hold good for children with MR as well; these are:

Simple to complex: We have to examine a task or concept on the basis of its complexity and then we should start teaching the easier / simpler task first and then proceed to its difficult parts.

Concrete to abstract: To teach about objects, we should first show the real things, then shift to the pictorial form and then present their verbal description.

Part to whole: We should break down the whole task into many small parts. We should first start with a small one and then add the next one and gradually keep on moving to its last part. Finally, we should present its complete form of it and explain to the child how these small parts make it up.

Known to unknown: We should teach a child about an unknown thing using those things about which a child already knows. If a child has seen rocks then we can explain to the child that mountains look very much like these rocks though their size and height are much bigger.

Generalization: A generalization is a general statement that applies to many situations or facts. After it has been carried out, the child should use it and apply it correctly in different situations. For example, if a child has learnt the general process of tying a knot – he/she should be able to tie and tie a variety of knots, shoe laces.

Sequential: Whatever we teach our students, it should be taught in a psychological sequence that facilitates learning it.

Behaviour Modification

The importance of this aspect in any kind of teaching and training programme cannot be over-emphasized for special children. Such children need training to develop desirable manners and conduct if any teaching is to take place. Such children are not quite aware of their behaviour even if it is odd and do not have much concern about the fact that it can cause problems to others. They need to be gently, made aware of it. This can be done through reinforcement and punishment techniques, not corporal punishment, of course.

3.7 TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS (TLM)

The main objective of teaching a mentally retarded child is to develop his adaptation level. This can be done with the help of the following teaching learning material.

3.7.1 General

Flash cards: These can be used for identification of the names and action words. The picture on flash cards should be very neat, clear and very close to the real objects. The size of the picture should not be less than 2" × 2 ½". It should be pasted on a piece of cardboard so that it can be used many times for a long period.

Pictures: Whatever we want to show the students through pictures should be faithful to the object, good in details and have natural & real colours. Pictures can be used and teaching to build their imagination, reading pictures.

Blocks / puzzles: They are very helpful for improving children's eye-hand coordination, enhance logical thinking, part and whole concept, searching for the missing details, matching real objects with concept.

Educational toys / games: These make learning fun for children. Toys and games can help explain and teach things at a pace which children find quite comfortable. Educational toys and games should be made of durable material and use non-toxic colours.

Concrete materials: These are important to provide children real life experience. Things in concrete materials make concept formation easier for children, as they can feel them, see them, and if possible smell, taste and hear them.

Story books: Story books supplement verbal explanation with visual inputs. They not only make their language better and improve learners' comprehension but also make the recall and recitation better as they are able to fall back on the visual clues to complete the story.

Globes / maps/ charts / visual aids: These teaching aids provide children with visual details of a concept, object, formation and structure. Such teaching learning materials are effective in supporting visual memory. These can be placed in learner' surroundings to check the loss in visual memory so the learning which has taken place lasts longer.

Workbooks and worksheets: These are to be prepared by the teachers as per the level and needs of a particular child. Teachers have to choose a picture pattern either from a readily available book or draw these things themselves. They should keep them ready in sufficient number so that children's precious learning time in not wasted everyday in preparing them daily.

Tactile material: We should have pieces of different textures to enable children to feel them and realize for themselves their shape and texture. We should have smooth, sticky, slippery, thorny material, and also soft, hard and spongy material so that we can provide children with these tactile inputs.

Models: Three dimensional models facilitate learning in a classroom. Through models, children can be showed and taught the things which are not possible to be shown for touching e.g. structure and lay out of industrial plants, solar system and internal human body parts, etc.

Abacus: An abacus is very useful aid for teaching children the number concept, number value and can be used for teaching small and big number, what comes after or before a number, addition and subtraction as an abacus provides a concrete learning medium.

Real objects: As far as possible we should use real objects taking all necessary precautions because at times using real objects can be dangerous for the safety of children. Real objects provide children all the sensory inputs in most of the cases – in terms of shape, colour, size, weight, texture, smell and taste.

Shapes / sizes and colours: Whatever we see around us has particular shape, size and colour. These sensory inputs which provide us definite information about an object or a living thing. We should equip children with these skills so that they can become independent in identifying and recognizing things; these skills are very important to form concepts about things.

Audio books: Audio books are audio cassette tapes which are loaded in tape recorders to listen its contents. They help children in getting information even if they lack reading skills.

Multimedia CDs: These are the CDs on which information is coded digitally in print, graphs and photo modes. As they are interactive, they present text, which can be read by students, they guide students how they can operate them and once you respond as directed, they inform you whether or not your response are correct.

3.7.2 Specific

While teaching mentally handicapped children we need to follow a systematic approach because if we do not teach the things keeping in mind their future needs they can get confused and we will not be able to teach them the concepts we want to teach. So we start with the following skills:

- *Matching:* We first teach the children to pick up identical things, this may be colour wise, shape wise or size wise. But we should initially ask them to do so on the basis of one feature only.

- *Sorting:* In teaching this skill we ask the child to pick out the thing which is different from the rest – colour wise, shape wise or size wise.
- *Naming:* After teaching the above two skills we name the colour – red, yellow, or green, and shapes – circle, square, triangle, and then size- big/ small, thin / fat, long/ short.
- *Identification:* We ask the children to identify one particular object from the rest of the things.
- *Recognition:* This skill means the child should be able to recognize an object when it is presented to him as a single item one at a time.
- *Sequence:* The child should be taught the skill to present things in a seriated ascending or descending order.
- *Task analysis:* Under this a complex task is broken down into small achievable steps in a sequence.

Brushing Skills

i) Open the cap of a toothpaste tube.

ii) Put the nozzle of the toothpaste tube on the brush.

iii) Squeeze the paste out of the toothpaste tube.

iv) Put the cap on the nozzle of the toothpaste tube.

v) Keep your upper jaw touching the lower jaw and open your lips in an oval shape.

vi) Rub your front teeth from left to right and then right to left.

vii) Reach the left side of your jaws and brush left to right and right to left.

viii) Reach the right side of your jaws and brush left to right and right to left.

ix) Open your mouth and brush inside the left side of your lower jaw from front and right.

x) Brush left side of your upper jaw from front and right.

xi) Spit out toothpaste foam.

xii) Gargle with water.

Chaining: This means performing a task starting from the first to the second and so on to the last step. (Brushing skills provide a good example of chaining)

Backward chaining: It means performing a task in reverse order starting from its last step and then gradually moving to its second and finally its first step. (Task Analysis can be used starting from last step and ending with its first step is an example of back chaining).

Fading: We should systematically keep on removing the props i.e. – physical / verbal support to make the child completely independent in performing the task.

3.8 INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN

Using an individualized education plan for giving skill training is of prime importance for teaching MR children. The technique of providing academic and non-academic training input not only helps the teacher to remain focused in his efforts but also ensures that the children too get these inputs in a very individualized manner.

Topic – Putting on a Shirt

General Objective – Dressing (Daily living skills)

Specific Objective – Buttoning up the front buttons.

Present Level of Functioning – the child has good pinch grasp and can hold a small object with the tip of thumb and the first finger and can put on the shirt on his own.

Material required –

i) A button hole frame, it is a wooden frame with two cloth pieces attached on the two sides of the frame one has the buttons and the other has holes corresponding to the number of buttons.

ii) A shirt with large buttons.

iii) A shirt with normal buttons.

Procedure: The selection of wooden frame and the shirt with large buttons depends on the level of child. If the child's eye-hand coordination is very poor then we should use the wooden frame first. Once the child has mastered this skill on wooden frame then he should work on the shirt with large buttons. When the child has learnt how to button up, independently then he should practice on the normal shirt for independent practice of the skill.

Task Analysis

i) Hold the button with one hand.

ii) Hold the hole with the other hand.

iii) Bring both the hole and the button closer.

iv) Insert the button through the hole.

v) Once the button has passed through the hole, hold the holed cloth with the same hand with which you were holding the button.

vi) Pull out the hole button with the hand with which you were holding the button.

vii) Repeat the procedure for the remaining buttons.

Feedback: Once you have taught the skill and gave him lot of practice with a view to check the child's level of independent performance, ask him to do the entire task independently without seeking any help. Wherever he fails the specific task, he should be taught it in a more focused manner.

3.9 CONCESSIONS/FACILITIES

Travel: Indian Railways allow disabled persons to travel at concessional fares (up to 75%) in the first and the second class sleeper. Escorts accompanying blind, orthopaedically and mentally handicapped persons are also eligible to 75% concession in the basic fare. But to avail this, they should have a railway concession certificate duly filled in. Disability certificate issued by a Government hospital is the basic requirement for seeking the railway concession certificate.

Educational allowance: Reimbursement of tuition fee in respect of physically and mentally handicapped children of the central government employees has been enhanced to Rs.50/-

Income tax concession: The amount of deduction from the total income of a person who suffers from blindness, mental retardation, and physical disability which substantially reduce their capacity of engaging in gainful employment has been increased up to Rs.40,000/-

Physically handicapped candidates who have been appointed on regional basis may be given, as far as possible, postings near their native place. Similarly a request for transfer by physically handicapped persons for group C and D posts under government is also considered favourably.

Parents of mentally retarded children are also given preference in posting/transfer to a place where special facilities for their mentally retarded children are available.

Economic assistance by public sector banks: All orphanages, women's homes and physically handicapped persons as well as institutions working for the welfare of the handicapped are given loans and advances at very low rate of interest (4% under DRI). National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation provides loans to handicapped persons and their spouses on a very concessional rate (about 4% per annum). They provide loans ranging from rupees 5,000/- to about 5 lakhs for different vocational choices.

3.10 SUM UP

Mental retardation is "sub-average general intellectual functioning that is accompanied by significant limitations in adaptive functioning in at least two of the self help skill areas. On the basis of its degree, mental retardation can be classified as mild, moderate, severe, or profound. The identification and assessment of mental retardation is done by observing physical features and delay in developmental milestones such as sitting, standing, walking, talking etc. Apart from this, the checklist of development milestones and self-help skill is also used for assessment of mentally retarded children. Teaching strategies for MR children include simple to complex, concrete to abstract, part to whole, known to unknown, generalization and sequential. The main objective of teaching learning material for teaching mentally retarded children is to develop their adaptation level for which flash cards, pictures, blocks, educational toys, story books, concrete material, tactile materials, charts, visual

aids, audio books, models, etc. used. The role of **individualized education plan** is very important for teaching a child with mental retardation. This unit also describes the concessions and facilities available to MR children and their parents.

3.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Give a brief description of the features of a moderately mentally retarded child.

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- Briefly describe educational classification of mental retardation.

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- Describe physical characteristics of persons with mental retardation.

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- Briefly describe the teaching strategies used for mentally retarded child.

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- Prepare an individualized educational plan for teaching a social skill to a moderately mentally retarded child.

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- Explain different kinds of teaching learning materials used with MR children.

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UNIT 4 LOCO-MOTOR IMPAIRMENT

Structure of the Unit

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will provide you a broad overview of concept and definition of loco-motor impairment and its special education needs. The identification and assessment of loco-motor impaired children has been explained in very objective terms. Besides, teaching strategies, this unit deals with the aids and appliances along with teaching learning material.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain the concept/meaning of loco-motor impairment;
- identify and assess the loco-motor impaired child; and
- deal with a loco-motor impaired child in the classroom with specific aids and appliances.

4.3 DEFINITION AND TYPES

Loco-motor impairment means disability of the bones, joints or muscles leading to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs or any form of cerebral palsy.

Types of Loco-motor Impairment

Polio or Poliomyelitis is a condition usually found in children. It is caused by a viral infection and causes paralysis of muscles of limbs and spine. Generally, children with polio have problems in walking on their own.

Muscular dystrophies: These are a group of disorders of the muscles resulting in difficulty in movement. The weakness in the muscles increases with time.

Cerebral palsy (CP): Cerebral Palsy is a term used to describe a group of disorders affecting body movement and muscle coordination. It occurs as a result of damage to the developing brain, particularly to the motor areas controlling co-ordination, posture and balance.

Amputations: Amputation is a loss of a part or whole of a limb, as a result of injury, disease or operation.

Further, loco-motor impairment may also be caused by a fracture or head injury.

4.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Identification and assessment of loco-motor impaired children is based on their common characteristics, through a checklist and also with the help of clinical method.

4.4.1 Common Characteristics

- Difficulty in walking.
- Difficulty in grasping objects.
- Difficulty in writing.
- Visible muscular unco-ordination.
- A part of the body fully or partly paralysed.
- Any part of the body amputated.
- A visible physical deformity.
- Difficulty in moving from one place to another.
- Difficulty in climbing steps.
- A jerky gait.
- Totally uncoordinated gait.

Identification checklist

Loco-motor	Yes	No
Does the child have difficulty in moving or using any part of the body?		
Is any part of the child's body amputated?		
Does the child limp or have difficulty in moving his/her hands?		
Does the child walk with jerks?		
Is the child using a stick to walk?		
Does the child lack bodily coordination?		
Does the child have tremors?		

Since cerebral palsy (CP) constitutes a major chunk of loco-motor impairment, this has been dealt with in detail.

Assessment of CP Children

Formal: Whichever professional the family consults, they must look at the child as a whole person and his needs in all development areas must be taken into account. These include: physical, sensory, language, communication, social, emotional and intellectual.
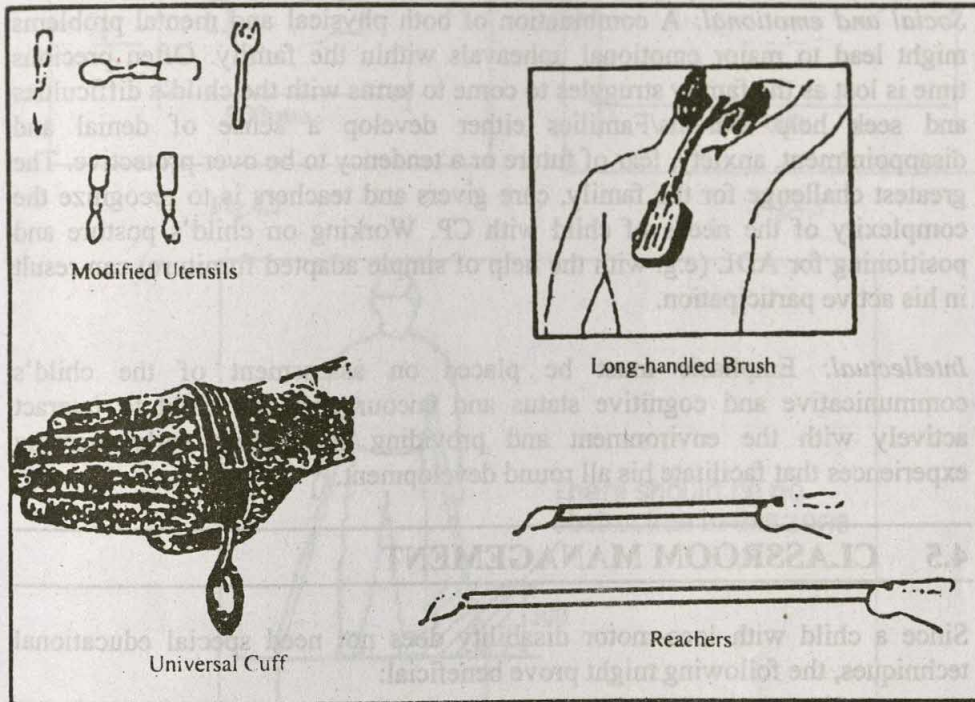
Fig.4.1: Some utensils and tools for the loco-motor impaired

Physical: The main effect of CP is difficulty in movement for example: walking, feeding, talking or using one's hands. Some children are unable to sit up without support and need constant assistance. A common finding with children who have CP is spasticity (increased muscle tone reaction), which may affect a single limb, one side of the body (spastic hemiplegia), both legs (spastic diplegia) and/or both arms and legs (spastic quadriplegia).

Sensory: Impaired vision and hearing, compulsive seizures and mental disabilities may be present in any of the four types of CP (as described above). As the child grows, other difficulties may become evident, which may include lack of response to visual and auditory stimuli, absence of babbling or inability to speak.

Language and communication: Many children with CP have complex communication disorders and less than functional speech. They often have difficulty in controlling their movements and facial expressions. Therefore speech problems are common and seizures may occur.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

- AAC including facial expressions, gestures, signs, body movements, visual displays using pictures, symbols and words referred to as low tech systems and hi-tech computer based communication systems with voice outputs.
- AAC is multidisciplinary and requires a team approach that the child, parents can benefit from. The team may include teachers, speech pathologists, special educators, physio and occupational therapist.

Social and emotional: A combination of both physical and mental problems might lead to major emotional upheavals within the family. Often precious time is lost as the family struggles to come to terms with the child's difficulties and seek help. Parents/Families either develop a sense of denial and disappointment, anxiety, fear of future or a tendency to be over protective. The greatest challenge for the family, care givers and teachers is to recognize the complexity of the needs of child with CP. Working on child's posture and positioning for ADL (e.g. with the help of simple adapted furniture) can result in his active participation.

Intellectual: Emphasis must be placed on assessment of the child's communicative and cognitive status and encouraging the child to interact actively with the environment and providing stimulating early learning experiences that facilitate his all round development.

4.5 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Since a child with loco-motor disability does not need special educational techniques, the following might prove beneficial:

All that is necessary is to remove architectural barriers and ensure that the child has a comfortable seat. If he/she is using a wheel chair, the desk should be at such a height so as to enable the child to reach it without experiencing any kind of discomfort. This also applies to reaching the blackboard as well. All the materials should be within easy reach of the child.

4.5.1 Physical Environment

Classrooms are active environments, and often involve the movement of both teachers and students. The physical structure of the classroom may be changed by the teacher to ensure effective learning. Circular or horse shoe arrangement of furniture is advised for all children (Figs. 4.2 to 4.9). Where there is lack of space for such arrangements, consideration for moveability of children with LI & CP (using mobility aids) should be observed.

Adequate space for children using mobility devices e.g. wheelchairs, crutches and walkers, as well as those walking with the assistance of other children (Figs. 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) in the classroom, libraries, canteen, playground etc.
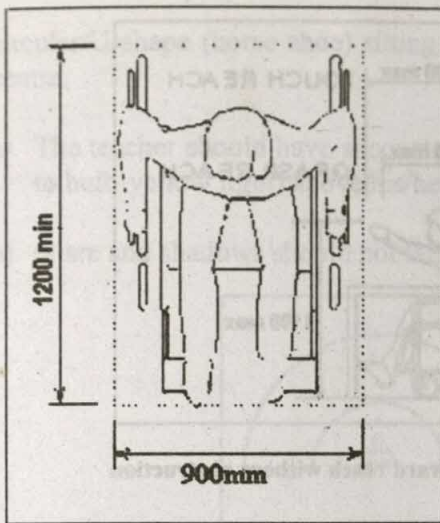
Fig.4.2
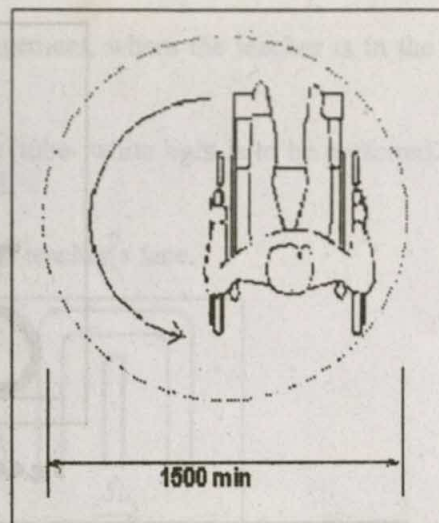
Fig.4.3
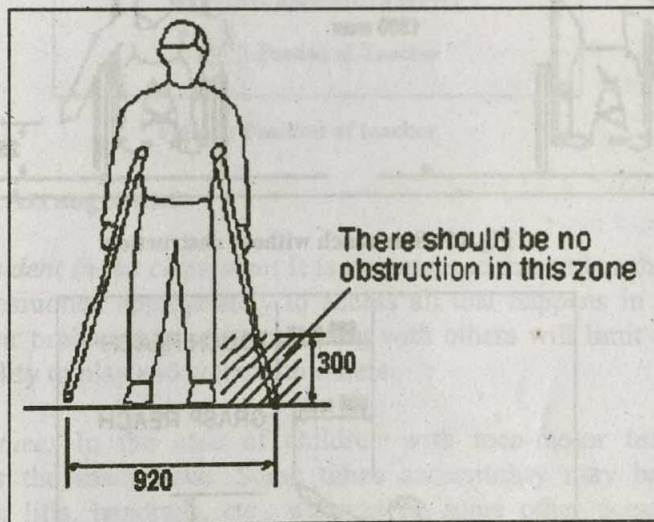
Fig.4.4: Space allowance

The range of reach (forward and side; with or without obstruction) of a child in a wheelchair should be taken into consideration (Figs. 4.5-4.8). Different reach heights are important for LI children for working in library, classroom, canteen etc.
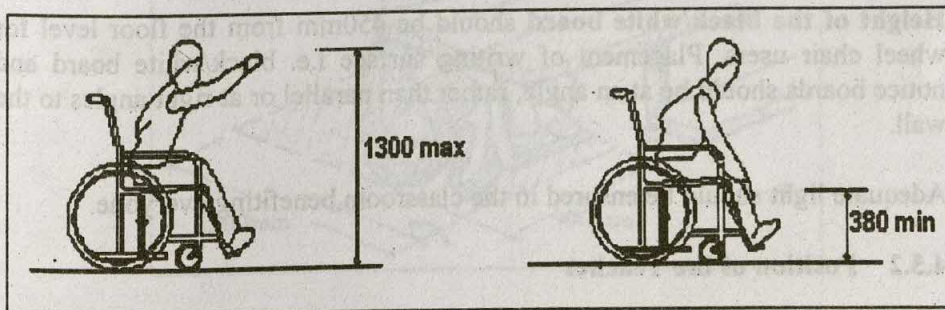
Fig.4.5: Forward reach without obstruction
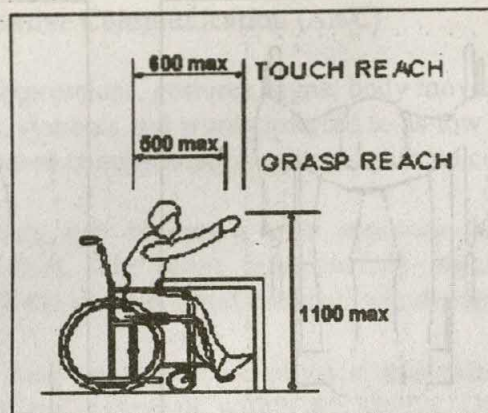
Fig.4.6: Forward reach without obstruction
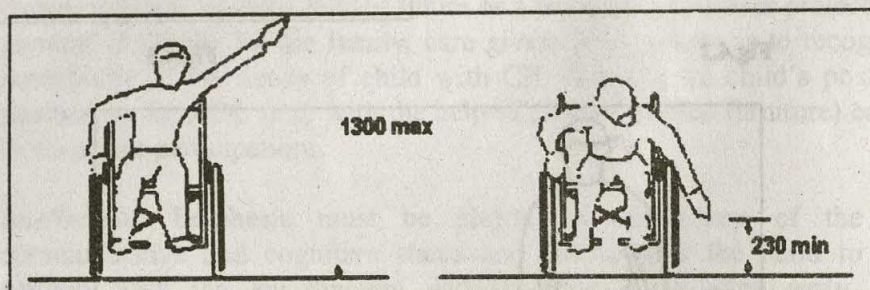
Fig.4.7: Side reach without obstruction
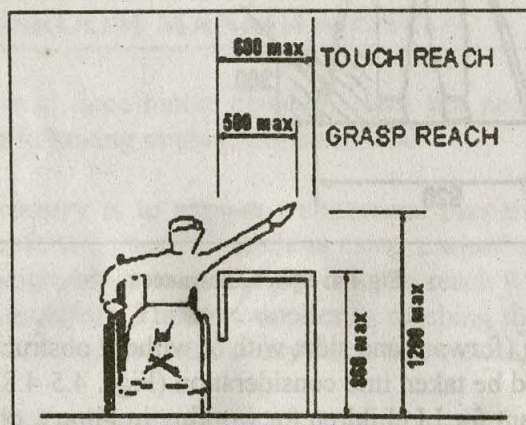
Fig.4.8: Side reach without obstruction

Height of the black/white board should be 450mm from the floor level for wheel chair users. Placement of writing surface i.e. black/white board and notice boards should be at an angle, rather than parallel or at right angles to the wall.

Adequate light should be ensured in the classroom benefiting everyone.

4.5.2 Position of the Teacher

Many strategies may be used to enhance learning of CWSN. Emphasis may be given to the position of the teacher in the classroom. For example it becomes easier for all children to have adequate interaction with the teacher in a

circular/U shape (horse shoe) sitting arrangement, where the teacher is in the centre.

a) The teacher should have adequate light (tube- white light is to be preferred to bulb-yellow light) above his/her head.

b) Glare and shadows should not fall on the teacher's face.
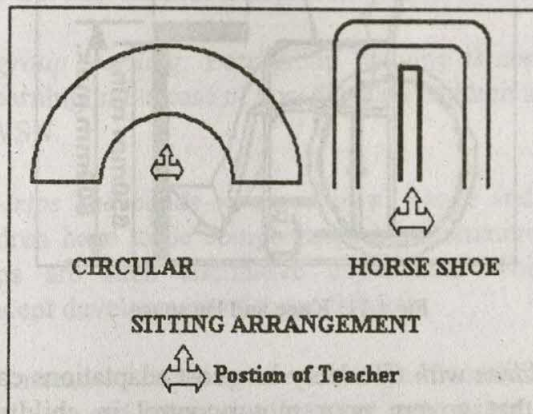
Fig.4.9: Position of teacher

4.5.3 Sitting Arrangements

Position the student in the classroom: It is important to remember that CWSN needs to be positioned appropriately to access all that happens in the class. Sometimes their problems in communicating with others will limit their self-esteem and ability to play and work with others.

Adapted furniture: In the case of children with loco-motor impairment, accessibility is the main issue. Some times accessibility may be ensured through ramps, lifts, handrails, etc., whereas on some other occasions, the accessibility may be in terms of appropriate furniture.
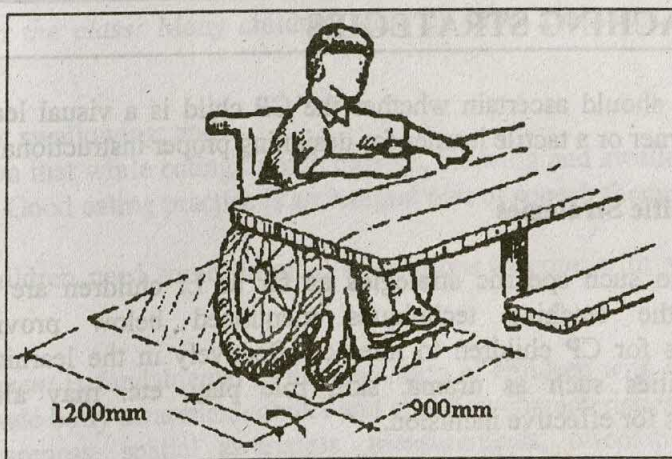
Fig.4.10: Position of wheelchair

Seating around the table should not be more than 800mm from the floor and should have knee and leg space (Fig. 4.11). For example, for a child using wheel chair, the table may be mounted in such a way that the wheel chair can

get inside and child is in a position to sit comfortably. Such modified furniture is necessary for the effective functioning of the child.
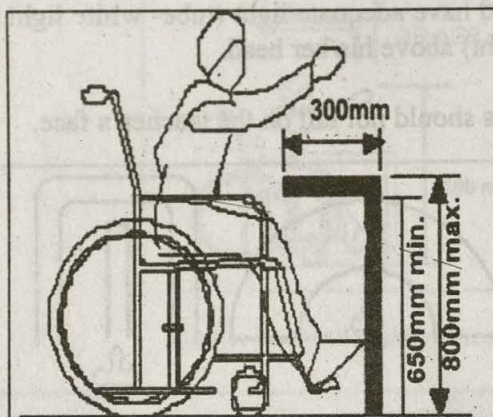
Fig.4.11: Knee and leg space

Positioning of children with CP: Very low-cost adaptations can be carried out if the principles that govern poor motor-control in children with CP are understood.

Whether seating is on a floor seat or a chair, the following should be kept in mind.	a) The trunk (if needed) should be well supported.
	b) Feet should be flat, or during long periods of immobility the feet should have a splint or support so that they are at 90 degrees to the legs.
	c) If the child has good sitting balance, then an ordinary chair or floor can be used.
Positioning of CP student	d) To be given a front seat, as a CP child might have vision and speech impairments.

4.6 TEACHING STRATEGIES

The teacher should ascertain whether the CP child is a visual learner or an auditory learner or a tactile learner for designing proper instructional strategies.

4.6.1 Specific Strategies

There are no such specific strategies as far as LI children are concerned. However, the teaching techniques mentioned below provide ample opportunities for CP children to interact effectively in the learning process. Other activities such as drama, skit, role play, etc. may also provide opportunities for effective inclusion.

Play-way method: In this method, the child is introduced to the lesson through a number of play activities and in the process of such play, the teacher introduces specific concepts.

Providing concrete experiences: As far as children with CP are concerned, providing concrete learning experiences becomes pertinent. For example:

- Concrete experiences involving three dimensional objects, etc.
- Learning through pictorial material.

Facilitating learning by involving CWSN in groups: In a class consisting of CWSN, group learning can be planned by involving a child with disability in a group consisting of non-disabled children. This kind of activity not only develops academic skills but also influences social integration of the child.

Teacher assisted peer-group learning: Peer group learning is considered to contribute to effective learning in the case of non-disabled children and it is not less so in the case of CWSN.

Learning through field-trips and hands-on experience: Range and variety of experiences in CP children have to be compensated by alternative modes of information. Field trips are such alternative experiences which mostly contribute to proper concept development of these children.

Peer-to-peer learning: Instead of insisting too much on theoretical learning, encourage learning by doing and interactive learning approaches to develop appropriate concepts.

Multi-sensory approach in learning: Multi-sensory approach is not only useful for CP children but for other children too who experience learning problems. Identify the learning preference – visual, auditory or tactile of the students and facilitate learning through small groups.

Speech and communication: Many children with CP may have speech impairment or have a 'time lag' in response and some may even be non-verbal. *However all of them want and need to say many things!* Many "non- verbal" children also respond with a 'yes' and 'no' response. They may use different parts of the body to communicate. They might use hands, eyes or a nod of head.

Speech therapy in the class: Many children with CP drool (salivate). Such children should be:

i) taught frequent swallowing; and
ii) impressed upon that while eating, mouth closure, chewing and swallowing are important. Good eating practice is an integral part of speech therapy.

Cognition: CP children need some physical adaptations to cope with school curriculum.

Concept Development is fundamental in the education of children with CP. In general these include body awareness, object and situation characteristics, time and distance awareness, spatial awareness, measurements, orientation of environment, etc. These have to be consciously developed in the child. (Refer to Exercises I & II below)

Reader and scribe services: Due to their disability, some of these children need assistance during examination time. For example, a child with cerebral palsy may benefit by reader services and require a scribe to write the answers. In many such examinations, class tests, term-end examinations, etc., are

conducted and, therefore, a number of non-disabled children from the same class, or from higher classes may be involved in assisting children with CP.

Exercise 1: Pertaining to Concept Development

Body awareness: Show your left hand, show your stomach, move the head up, spread the feet apart, etc.
Object/situation characteristics: Discrimination of long and short, hard and soft objects, identifying colour of objects and characteristics (e.g.: leaf and green colour) identifying softness of sound, etc.
Time and distance awareness: Which month comes after July, the sun rises approximately at 6.00 a.m. / 10.00 a.m. /2.00 p.m. / 9.00 p.m.; how many meters form a kilometre, etc.
Spatial awareness: Turn about, walk in zigzag manner, sound localization, direction, etc.
Skills oriented (action) concepts: Crawling, kicking the ball, pulling the chair, moving the head, etc.
Measurements: More and less (objects given), how many twos make ten? Place value of numbers, etc.
Orientation of environment: What do you mean by river, post office, plant, cloud, etc?

Exercise 2: Making Learning Easy for CP Child

Words spoken / written: wonderful, excellent, absolutely right, fantastic, terrific, marvellous, splendid, all right, clever, thank you, that's good work, well thought out, that shows a great deal of work, I agree, keep working hard, you've improved.
Expression: Physical expressions; facial or bodily: smiling, nodding, signalling OK, thumbs up, shaking head in approval.
Closeness / nearness: touching, interacting with class during recess, sitting on the desk near students, walking among students, patting shoulder, touching hand.
Activities – individual or group: leading student groups, running errands, putting away materials, choosing activities, leading discussions, movies, playing records, visiting another class, making a game of the subject matter, presenting skits.
Things: Materials, food, playthings.
Awards: Games, book markers, colours, bulletin board, story books, puzzles, stars, tokens, toffees, biscuits, medals, badges.

4.7 TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS

Preparation of appropriate teaching-learning materials should be treated as effective educational technology. As the child with CP have fewer motor experiences (hearing/speech impairments), it may affect his/her learning.

Gross and Fine Motor Development

These can be achieved through simple activities and exercises on the playground and through indoor activities.

- *Gross motor:* Larger body movements like sitting, standing and walking.

- *Fine motors:* Hand function smaller movements like writing, cutting, stitching etc.

- *Hand function:* Many children with cerebral palsy may not have good motor function. They, may not be able to write or tie their shoelaces. They may need either an assistive device like a thicker pen, or a stamp pad, or a typewriter or computer to key-in the answers instead of writing them in the conventional manner.

- However, many students are able to write and type but are slow and hence need support in the classroom and a scribe during examinations. Adoptions can be made for all other hand function activities also. In most cases, use of a larger diameter and a longer handle may suffice.

  i) Pencil/chalk
  ii) Eraser
  iii) Scale

These can be made with plaster of Paris or any other material depending on the creativity of the teacher and the peer group. This can form a topic for a class project in craft and design technology.

Full-length mirrors: Posture assumes importance in the rehabilitation of children with LI or CP; a full-length mirror can help create awareness in them about their physical posture.

Television and VCR: Like any other CWSN, children with LI or CP need to learn through multi-sensory approaches. As TV and VCR facilitate interactive mode of learning, it is essential to have such items in their learning environment.

Computers: Many children with LI including those with CP are good at handling computers. Therefore, it is essential to provide computer training to them, with a view to developing their job potential.

4.8 AIDS AND APPLIANCES

It will be helpful for the teacher to know the type of aids and appliances to be used by children with disabilities for their education and rehabilitation. Some

of the aids and appliances for each category of disability are briefly described as follows:

Unlike children with other disability areas, LI children are neither cognitively impaired nor sensorially impaired. Some children may need a *mobility aids* - like rollator or walker and crutches.

4.8.1 Mobility Aids

- *Walking aids:* Walking sticks, crutches (Auxiliary, Elbow, Gutter), walkers and rollators.

- *Wheel chairs:* Hand operated, motorized/battery operated, electronically controlled.

- *Tricycles:* Hand driven and motorized.
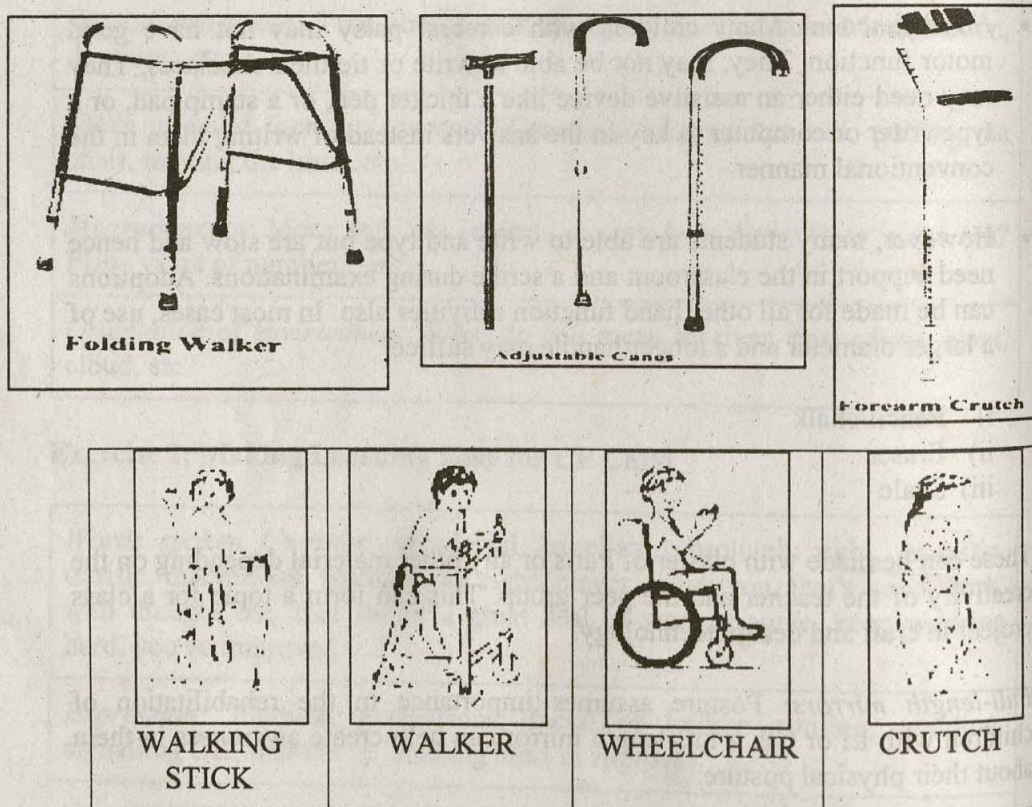
Fig.4.12

4.8.2 Orthotic and Prosthetic Aids

Orthosis: The word '*orthos*' means straight. It is an appliance used by a person and it allows better use of that part of body to which it is fitted. Different types of orthosis are:

- *Upper extremity orhtosis:* Braces and Splints (finger, wrist hand immobilizers, aeroplane splint, hand splints).

- *Lower extremity orthosis:* Calipers (AFO, KAFO, HKAFO), knee cages, gaiters, braces, surgical/modified boots.

- Spinal Orthosis.

Prosthesis

This is to replace the lost part of the body. The different types of prosthesis are:

- *Upper extremity:* above-elbow and below-elbow
- *Lower extremity:* above-knee and below-knee

Writing aids

- Wrist and elbow supports
- Cock-up splints and forearms
- Thumb and finger splints

4.8.3 Assistive Devices for CP children

Besides mobility and writing aids listed above, a CP child may require the following devices for better support/development:

- Back supports
- Pelvic traction kits and spares
- Cervical aids
- Cervical traction kits and spares
- Abdominal supports

4.9 CONCESSION/FACILITIES

Railway Concession Certificate (RCC) for Handicapped/ Disabled Persons & Patients.

Sl. No.	Category of persons eligible for concessions	Percentage of concessions Ist IInd/SL Class	Specific travel conditions	Authority on which concession is allowed
1.	Orthopaedically handicapped persons/ paraplegic patients, who can not travel without the assistance of an escort (& accompanied by an escort).	75% 75% Note: 75 % concession in AC-3 Tier & AC Chair Car also. 50% concession in AC 2 Tier & AC Ist class. 50 % concession in Ist/ IInd class / monthly / quarterly season ticket fare is also allowed to orthopaedically handicapped persons/ paraplegic patients & their escorts, subject to certain conditions.	None	Prescribed certificate from a Govt. doctor.

Paste Passport size Photograph duly signed & stamped by the issuing Doctor.

Appendix 1/36

CONCESSION CERTIFICATE

Form for the purpose of grant of rail concession to orthopaedically Handicapped Paraplegic persons / patients to be used by the Government Doctor

This is to certify that Km./Shri/Smt.. Whose Particulars are furnished below, is a bonafide *Orthopaedically /Handicapped / Paraplegic person / patient and CANNOT TRAVEL WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF AN ESCORT

Particulars of the Orthopaedically Handicapped / paraplegic person / patient

(a) Address ....

(b) Father's / Husband's Name ....

(c) Age. (d) Sex..................................

(e) Nature of Handicap. (To be written by doctor whether the disability is Temporary or Permanent)

(f) Causes of loss of Functional capacity ....

(g) Signature or Thumb impression of Orthopaedically handicapped / paraplegic person / patient : (not necessary for those whose both hands are missing.................................... or non-funtional).

....
(Signature of Government Doctor)

Place ....

Date

....
Clear seal of Government Hospital/Clinic

....
Seal containing full name and Regd.No Of the Doctor

* Strike out where not applicable.

Note -

(1)This certificate should be issued only to those Orthopaedically Handicapped / paraplegic persons / patients WHO CANNOT TRAVEL WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF AN ESCORT. The photo must be signed and stamped in such a way that Doctor's signature and stamp appears partly on the certificate

(2)In the case of temporary disability, the certificate will be valid for five years from the date of issue. In the case of permanent disability, the certificate will remain valid for (1) five years, in case of persons upto the age of 25 years, in case of persons in the age group of 26 to 35 years and (3) in the case of persons above the age of 35 years, the certificate will remain valid for whole life of the concerned person. After expiry of the period of the validity of the certificate, the person is required to obtain a fresh certificate is accepted for the purpose of grant on concession. The original certificate will have to be produced for instruction at the time of purchase of concessional ticket and during the journey, if demanded

(3)No alteration in the form is permitted.

4.10 SUM UP

Loco-motor impairment affects a child's ability to move around due to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs. A different kind of loco-motor problem can either lead to weakening of muscles leading to coordination problem or affects a child's ability to work, move around, or climb. A child may also face problem in grouping objects. Identification and assessment of

children with loco-motor problems including cerebral palsy is provided in this unit. Classroom management its own is not a major need of the children with loco-motor problem. What is required is inclusion of barrier-free features in the school and classroom to help the child access the material, blackboard or any other important area. TLM for these children are mainly in the form of computers, TV/VCR, full length mirrors, etc. Aids and appliances include mobility aids orthotics and prosthetics aids and assistive devices for CP children. The concessions available for children with movement problems have also been mentioned in this unit.

4.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Activity 1

i) Can a person who is physically disabled go to the market?

Yes No Not Sure

ii) Do you feel sorry for your friend who is disabled?

Yes No Not Sure

iii) Can blind children hear as other children?

Yes No Not Sure

iv) If a person is retarded, does it mean that he/she will never grow up?

Yes No Not Sure

v) Are all deaf children alike?

Yes No Not Sure

vi) Can a person in a wheelchair be a teacher?

Yes No Not Sure

vii) Do all children have a right to go to school?

Yes No Not Sure

Complete the following:

i) Loco-motor impairment is a problem of ___________, ___________ and ___________.

ii) Loco-motor problems deal with problems in ___________.

iii) Weakness in muscles which increases with time is called ___________.

iv) Amputation is ___________.

v) Wheel chairs and tricycles are ______________ aids.

Activity 2: Learning to understand and to help children with physical disability

All of us have different types of physical abilities. Even in your class there are some who are good at sports and others who can draw well. Some children manage to complete their written work very quickly. There are children who are interested in playing, drawing and writing. But some children need physical help because they are not able to use their arms and legs in the same way as their classmates. They may need assistance to move about, to participate in games, in going to school or even in daily routine activities.

Let's experiment

In order to understand the experiences of a CWSN, try to do the following activities

- Walking up the stairs
- Visiting the toilet
- Writing on the blackboard
- Eating your food

But wait! Try doing this while moving around on a wheel chair or after tying your knees with a rope or whatever you can find. Also wrap your fingers together with a cloth just to feel like a CWSN.

4.12 FURTHER READING

1. A Handbook of Child to Child Activities to Include Children with Disabilities, Sabla, Action Aid.
2. Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (1995). Promotion of Non-Handicapping Physical Environments for Disabled Children: Guidelines UNITED NATIONS New York.
3. Id21 insights # 55, May 2005.
4. On line http://www.Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) Bristol, United Kingdom.
5. Puri and Abraham (Eds.) (2004). *Handbook of Inclusive Education for Educators, Administrators and Planners.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

UNIT 5 VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Structure of the Unit

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will help you understand the nature and needs of visually impaired children. It includes the concept and meaning of visual impairment (VI), various methods for identification of visually impaired children including low vision and blind children. It helps the reader in identifying the visually impaired children in the classroom on the basis of characteristics that distinguish them from others.

The unit is designed to cover various dimensions with a view to enable you to help visually impaired children in the classroom. These include like management of the child, teaching strategies, teaching learning materials and making the readers aware about various other provisions and facilities available for them.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- describe the concept of visual impairment;
- identify visually impaired (VI) children on the basis of their common characteristics as well as with the help of some formal assessment tools;
- prepare teaching learning material for visually impaired children;
- advice their parents about the use of essential aids and appliances;
- manage the visually impaired (VI) child in the classroom; and
- plan suitable strategies to support and further their learning.

5.3 VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: THE CONCEPT

Vision is the most important sense required to observe and learn from what is happening around you. Any type of impairment in vision create problems in the learning process. Visual impairment ultimately hampers the development of the child especially his/her learning. Broadly, visual impairment can be divided into two types. Theses are:

Low vision: Low vision means markedly reduced functional vision in the individual. Low vision may demand large print materials and magnifiers for reading. Recent technological advancement have facilitated better learning opportunities for low vision children. A person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment e.g. an operation and / or standard refractive correction with glasses or lenses.

The Person with Disabilities Act, 1995 recognizes low vision as a category of disability and defines it as follows:

"Person with low vision" means a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment of standard refraction.

Blind: "Blindness" refers to a condition where a person suffers from total absence of sight or extremely limited field of vision or visual activity not exceeding 6/600 or 20/200 in the better eye even with corrective lenses or limitations of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse.

5.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

When prevention of disability is not possible curation becomes the objective. When curation is not possible, rehabilitation becomes the good. Identification and assessment help a great deal in facilitating rehabilitation of the blindness and those with low vision. The assessment and identification of VI children may be based on the common characteristics, informal as direct observation and formal procedures with the help of some assessment tools. The details in this respect are given below:

5.4.1 Common Characteristics

Blindness

- Child tilting his head to locate the light source.
- Pain and irritation in the eyes.
- Bumping into objects in the environment.
- Unable to write from the blackboard. Takes help from peers to copy from the blackboard.
- Poor performance in the class.
- Unable to read in poor lighting conditions.
- Unable to see during night.
- Depending too much on oral information.

- Rubs eyes excessively.
- Watery eyes.
- Eyelids are often red.
- Holds objects and the book too close to eyes.
- Squints or blinks when looking at something.
- Blinks more frequently.
- Regular headaches.

Low Vision

- Confident movement in school environment.
- Visual orientation to the new stimuli.
- Light gazing.
- Avoidance response to shadows.
- Interested in visual games.
- Avoidance of large obstacles.
- Unusual head tilt.
- Hand flickering.
- Distracted by movement in the environment.
- Startled response to suddenly approaching objects.

Child experiences difficulty in reading small prints

- The child experiences difficulty in identifying small details in pictures or illustrations.
- The child frequently complains of dizziness after reading a passage or completion of assignments involving vision.
- Frequently complains of headache, infection in eye; the child uses one eye more than the other.

5.4.2 Informal

These are simple methods and activities that parents and teachers can use in the classroom for asserting visual problems of the child, if any.

Direct Observation

- Light perception of difference between sunlight and dim light.
- Light perception of difference between good light and poor light in a class.
- Tracking of light.
- Detecting hand movement.
- Distance of detecting hand movement.
- Finger counting: Fingers raised one at a time.
- Finger counting: Fingers spread apart.
- Finger counting- (General): Fingers closed together.
- Finger counting inside the classroom with good lighting condition.
- Finger counting inside the classroom with poor lighting condition.

- Visual background.
- Colour detection.
- Visual closure.
- Form constancy.
- Eye/ hand coordination.
- Eye/ foot coordination.
- Print size preference without magnifiers.
- Print size preference with magnifiers.
- Time taken to read a passage in mother tongue or English.
- Skill in reading both print and Braille.
- Ability to write.
- Writing speed.

5.4.3 Formal / Clinical

The assessment of visual problems requires teamwork of educational, medical and other personnel such as volunteers and health workers. The teamwork consists of vision screening of all children, continuous classroom observation for behavioural and physical symptoms, and extending referral services for identified children for comprehensive eye examinations. An adequate programme of identification requires carrying out of each step in a carefully planned systematic manner.

Some children may be handicapped due to the restriction of the field vision. The field of vision is the entire area which can be seen while the eye remains fixed upon one point in straight line. When the widest angle of the central field is restricted to 20 degrees or less in the better eye with correction, the person is considered *legally blind*, even though he is usually able to read ink print materials.

5.4.4 Assessment Tools

These are commonly used tests to measure the extent of visual functioning and are discussed in brief in this sub section.

Snellen test and visual field tests: The tests are used to measure visual acuity and visual field.

Muscles balance tests: For testing muscle balance, special instruments are used which cause fusion to be dissociated. The most common tests are: 1. Maddox Rod Test, and 2. Allied Muscles Balance Test.

- *Maddox rod test:* This test is used to determine the postural position of the eyes when fusion is disrupted. This test yields excellent measurement of heterophoria and can also be used to detect hetrophoria. The procedure calls for the presentation of a different image to each eye at the same time.

- *Allied muscle balance test:* This test consists of a procedure in which the child wears specialized lenses while using a projector to place a red dot within a rectangle projected on a screen. This test may be difficult to teach

to some children, and it requires fine motor control and eye-hand coordination.

Tests of hyperopia: The tests for distant vision will detect the child with hyperopia or far- sightedness. The hyperopic child usually sees quite well at a distance but must accommodate for near-vision task

Plus lens test: It is a more adequate test to detect hyperopia. The child's vision is checked on the Snellen chart or on one of the binocular instruments while he is wearing plus lenses mounted in a small, inexpensive frame. If the child can see the 20-foot line at 20 feet from the chart with both eyes while wearing these lenses, he/she should be referred.

Near vision testing: Near visual acuity should be determined for children with low vision. Near vision information is of special importance for children with pathological defects where only distance visual acuity may be inadequate. Near vision is determined with one of several reading cards, which have either symbols, numerals or letters printed on them. The reading distance for low vision children and illumination should be recorded.

5.5 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management for the visually impaired children includes those parities in the school and classroom that help the visually impaired child to maintain and develop age-appropriate independence in performing classroom activities. It ensures that the visually handicapped child gets maximum benefit from the learning activities in the classroom. It ensures that visually impaired child has an unobstructed access to classroom space. Classroom management has great significance in the education of Visually Impaired (VI) children. In normal school environment, one teacher may instruct many children at a time but in a school where visually impaired children learn with sighted children, teachers have to pay attention to different types of children, therefore it becomes challenge for them. Hence, good classroom, management needs, good technical skills, sound human relations and effective use of skills in promoting learning abilities of various children.

5.5.1 Position of a Child in a Classroom

- Children trained in orientation and mobility uses with cane for detection of classroom entrance, their seat etc.
- Front seat may be assigned to visually impaired children.
- Changing of seat (if possible) too often, should not be encouraged as it disorients the child.
- The child is able to move about with confidence; unnecessary cluttering of furniture in the classroom should be avoided.
- Adequate lighting in the classroom helps children with low vision move about using their sight.
- Seating position to be so arranged that windows and doors totally shut out glare and shadows.

5.5.2 Sitting Arrangements

- Place the child's desk close to the teachers' desk, the black board and classroom door.
- To reduce the distracting glare, arrange the child's desk away from the light source, to a well-lighted area.
- Allow children to move closer to the blackboard to enhance opportunities to see and hear.
- Free the classroom from dangerous obstacles.
- Open or close doors fully.
- Eliminate as much unnecessary noise from the learning environment as possible.
- Do not speak too loudly (it increases volume level in the class; including background noise).
- Consider the individual's handicap but don't let it be an excuse for poor or unacceptable performance.
- Always place materials in their proper place so that children know where they are placed.
- Do not leave the room without telling the children.
- Seek assistance of a specialist in the specific area of visual impairment.

5.6 TEACHING STRATEGIES

The cognitive domain is concerned with the ability to perform a task. The affective domain is concerned with the will or desire or attitude to carry out the task. The psychomotor domain is concerned with carrying out practical aspect of the task. Based on these three domains, the faculty strategies have been divided into general and specific strategies.

5.6.1 General Strategies

These relate to adaptation of content and information for teaching a blind or a low vision child in the classroom. There is no change in the content of the lesson. These may be as under:

- The basic format of the lesson is not changed. All the items should be in sequence.
- The visually oriented information must be adapted wherever necessary.
- While presenting the pictures, finer visual details are omitted without compromising the thrust of the concept.
- When the finer visual details are omitted from the diagram, supplementary verbal description is given along with a tactile diagram.
- Wherever concept is important but not the diagram, the actual picture given in the print book is modified in tactile formats, which are understandable for example, in teaching a number concept.

- Contents given in the tables have been described row-wise.
- Wherever the actual duplication of a picture can not be presented in tactile form, the characters in the diagram are labelled.
- As Braille version of print page will run into approximately 2 to 3 pages, the print page is indicated on the left side of the Braille page and its Braille version on its right side. A horizontal line is given to mark the end of the page.
- If a box is given in the text to highlight the importance of the content(s) shown there in the same is provided in a small box. Wherever, the box is too big for tactile closure, the content given in the box is presented within square parenthesis. * Whenever small mathematical and scientific notations are used in the Braille text, they are listed at the beginning of the Braille book along with illustrations on how to use them.
- Along with the Braille copy of the text, the diagrams in the print form are also given at the end so as to enable to the teacher to provide verbal description of the diagram while teaching. References to these diagrams are also made in the Braille text wherever needed.

Adaptation of instructional material and methods in teaching visually impaired children and the use of special appliances: Guidelines for teaching methods should be developed based on the special characteristics of learning behaviours of the visually impaired children (VIC). Sighted children can easily learn many things just by watching what is happening around him. Just one glance can provide lot of information to a sighted child in a fraction of a second. But for the visually impaired children it is very difficult. The manner in which visually impaired children learns is not like that used by sighted learners. It is considerably mediated. Therefore activities designed for the visually impaired must be logical, sequential and systematic.

Learning takes place mostly from teachers and in formal teaching situations. It is a well known fact that learning is an effect of human growth. Very often learning is strengthened by "reinforcement". Visual feedback plays significant role in the reinforcement of varied experiences. Since tactile, auditory and olfactory senses may not be a complete substitute for vision, visually impaired children may take longer time to learn and need more repetitions to understand because of their limitations in vision. Concepts are visualized by visually impaired children through various bits of information. They explore, identify, discriminate and generalize through a step-by-step approach but sighted children learn as a WHOLE because of their normal vision.

Freedom and discipline are essential for learning. Learning is an active continuous process. Purposeful action is better than mechanically repeated motions. Functional learning is determined by knowledge, understanding and interpretation. When knowledge is to be assessed through recall and recognition, careful decisions must be made for promoting new learning by VIC. These learners should not be confused by the things that may have already been learnt by visually impaired children. For example, the word "darkness" may not be confused with mere absence of light. To know the difference between the two, the child must be explained the attributes of darkness and lightness.

We know that children learn from concrete to abstract. They must learn concrete ideas before they learn abstract ideas. The teacher should try to provide them as many concrete experiences as possible. This is so because of the reduction in the range and variety of experiences for the visually impaired children. It should be understood that concrete objects by themselves cannot be ideas to visually impaired children. It is necessary for the teacher to ensure that these considerations are not ignored. It must be systematically planned and every effort should be made by the teacher to promote learning by providing concrete ideas.

It is also observed that most of us have the wrong notion that the visually impaired children have superior learning power. This is, however, not true. In practice the visually impaired may be unable to make full use of their remaining senses. They must therefore, be properly oriented by involving trained personnel in the programme. If parents' involvement is needed for this purpose, all possibilities of availing the cooperation of parents and services of other para professionals should be explored.

The restrictions imposed by the impaired vision have implications for the teaching learning process; therefore, while implementing educational programmes for VI children, there is a need to use a variety of adapted instructional methods and materials.

5.6.2 Specific Strategies

Specific strategies involve the use of skills peculiar to blindness such as plus curricular activities, Braille, reading writing skills, orientation and monitoring and special equipment. These have been briefly explained below:

Plus Curricular Activities

Plus curricular activities meant for providing compensatory experiences to visually impaired children in inclusive education programmes. Plus Curriculum means development of skills peculiar to blindness such as Braille reading, Braille writing, orientation and mobility, daily living skills, sensory training and use of mathematical devices such as Taylor's Frame, abacus etc.,

Braille

Braille is a medium of written communication of that part of population that cannot communicate through usual print because of their visual impairment.

Every teacher should be familiar with open English Braille and Bharathi Braille as applicable to regional Indian languages. VI children should be taught how to read and write Braille preferably using the Braille slate.

To start with, VI children should be taught Braille reading. If possible, letters should be embossed on metal plate to ensure adequate sharpness. For some visually impaired students, metal pegs may also be used. Every attempt should be made to help these students to learn the configurations of the various letters and not merely go by the number of dots.

Writing on the Braille slate involves a mirror image and this may present some difficulty to some students especially in the beginning. If the difficulty persists, a Brailler may be used.

The following three methods of introducing Braille to the beginner are commonly used:

- Teaching letter by letter which is often called the **analytical** method.
- Reading the whole word at a time. This is possible only when the student knows the word well and it is a simple word.
- Reading the whole sentence often known as the **synthetic** method.

When teaching reading to blind students, it should be ensured that the student sweeps his finger across the word or sentence without making up and down movements. In writing it should be ensured that the student is holding the stylus erect to minimize fatigue.

The configuration of Braille dots for English alphabet is as follows:

Dot 1	**0 0**	**Dot 4**
Dot 2	**0 0**	**Dot 5**
Dot 3	**0 0**	**Dot 6**

The configuration of dots for different letters is as follows:

A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
0	0 . 0 . . .	0 0	0 0 . 0 . .	0 . . 0 . .	0 0 0 . . .

G	**H**	**I**	**J**	**K**	**L**
0 0 0 0 . .	0 . 0 0 . .	. 0 0 . . .	. 0 0 0 . .	0 . . . 0 .	0 . 0 . 0 .

M	**N**	**O**	**P**	**Q**	**R**
0 0 . . 0 .	0 0 . 0 0 .	0 . . 0 0 .	0 0 0 . 0 .	0 0 0 0 0 .	0 0 0 0 0 .

S	**T**	**U**	**V**	**W**	**X**
. 0 0 . 0 .	. 0 0 0 0 .	0 . . . 0 0	0 . 0 . 0 0	0 0 . . 0 0	0 0 0 . 0 0

Y	**Z**
0 0 . 0 0 0	0 . . 0 0 0

Activities for improving Braille reading

a) In a school, whether it is integrated or residential, reading readiness activities may be provided to the child before the introduction of Braille reading.

b) Finger manipulation and manual dexterity skills are of crucial importance for developing Braille related skills of the child.

c) For a beginner, a lot of teacher-made Braille text materials should be used rather than the actual Braille textbooks. The first grader often needs modification and editing in these materials.

d) In the primary level material, simple embossed diagrams should appear in the text which can stimulate the child's interest to read the Braille material.

Reading practice ideas for a beginner

When the child is through with the reading readiness activities, actual reading practice may be given in the following logical sequence.

- *Developing simple stories*

  The simple whole word story shows the principle of word arrangement in an easy-to-read activity. New word reminder, word differences and full phrases or sentences have to be stressed in reading. For example, the teacher may be planning to teach the words 'ball', 'smile' and 'roll' (new vocabulary). Assume that the child had been oriented to the words 'baby', 'see' and 'the' (old vocabulary) in the previous class.

  By mixing the old and new vocabularies, give hint to the child about the first line of the story. Let him develop the story now. Whenever the learner has any difficulty, the teacher may give assistance.

- *Matching*

  Another helpful experience that uses past readiness is matching of whole words, presented in lists or columns as given below:

  Instructions

  In each line, draw a circle around the word which is different:

baby	**roll**	**baby**
smile	**ball**	**smile**
see	**the**	**see**
roll	**roll**	**ball**

  Another activity might be finding one's name from other names in a list. Give only one or, at the most, two alternatives. Be certain that they are considerably different in their initial tactual form and/or length to help the child chose correct response.

- *Ordering*

  Another valuable activity combines reading, selecting a response and matching a given order or sequence. Use a few simple phrases or sentences in the beginning. The child is given a completed "story" to read, and next, matching "strips" with full sentences. The sentence strips can then be aligned, or matched in sequence with the original.

Multiple Choice
(Choosing a correct form from several given alternatives)

This differs from earlier matching activities as there is no "correct" form against which the child can compare his answer. This provides him with his first experience of "multiple choice" items.

For a visually disabled child, it is helpful to set forth the possible responses first. Then follow the choices with the question, which is best answered, or best completed with one of the responses already read.

Examples: 1. Mother I also
I like..........................

2. See Pencil the
Put down the..............

Co-Curricular Activities

Blind students can participate in many co-curricular activities. The following examples illustrate this point.

1. Adapted chess for VI students is available and blind and sighted students can play chess together.
2. Ordinary playing cards have been adapted and again blind and sighted children can play cards together.
3. Cricket ball can be adapted and blind and sighted students can play cricket together. In fact, blind students can also participate in school tournaments.
4. Blind students can take part in essay writing competitions.
5. Blind students can engage in debating, story telling, recitation and other similar activities along with sighted children.
6. Blind students can play kabaddi, skipping etc.
7. With some help, VI children can engage in running races.
8. VI children can play musical chairs.

Many more activities can be designed for VI children by innovative teachers.

Sector: Teaching of Games (Common for I and II)			
Sl. No.	**Concept/Goal**	**Sub-concept**	**Learning Outcome**
	For Standard – I		
VITG -1-	Indoor games: Solitary Play. a) Dominoes b) Chinese checker c) Snakes and ladders d) Montessori blocks like building block e) Form board.	a) To enable the child to take part in different indoor games. b) To enable the child to share materials, take turns, and listen to simple instructions and follows simple rules.	a) The child can participate in different solitary games as stated in the concept. b) The child can share materials; take turns, listen to simple instructions and follows simple rules.
VITG -2-	Indoor games Group play a) Bus game b) Word building c) Scrabble board	a) To enable the child to participate in the different indoor group games as stated in the concept.	a) The child can participate in different indoor group games as stated in the concept.
VITG -3-	Outdoor games a) Hide and seek b) In the pond, on the bank c) The wolf and the lion d) Fire on the mountain run, run, run. e) Eating race (e.g. Banana, Bun etc.)	a) To enable the child to take part in different outdoor group games as stated in the concept.	a) The child can participate in different outdoor group games as stated in the concept.
	For Standard – II		
VITG -4-.	Outdoor games (in Group) a) Kabbadi b) Three-legged race c) Lemon and spoon race d) Back walking race	a) To enable the child to participate in outdoor games/ activities as stated in the concept.	a) The child can participate in outdoor group games as stated in the concept.

	e) Passing the ball (over head, under foot, laterally).		
VITG -5-.	Outdoor games (Solitary) Skipping Spinning the top Throwing the ball Memory Test	a) To enable the child to participate in different outdoors solitary games as stated in the concept.	a) The child can participate in different outdoor solitary games as stated in the concept.

Pre-requisite skills for language development

- Language begins with the ability to listen and to extract meaning from the sounds.
- Listening involves hearing, attending, discriminating, understanding and remembering skills.
- Listening is a learned behaviour. The visually impaired children should be given proper orientation and necessary activities to develop their listening skills.
- Action oriented words should be used frequently.
- Language development depends upon various associated factors such as one's social experiences, opportunity to use language in different contexts, self- initiative to improve language abilities, assistance rendered by teachers and sighted classmates.
- Children must have experience in handling, manipulating and exploring objects to develop skills with which to explore environment.
- Children must be encouraged to use speech in every situation in which it is normally required.
- Children need to hear language.
- Teachers should speak slowly and provide a good speech model.
- Learning language should be fun and the student's efforts should be appreciated and rewarded.
- Communication activities should be meaningful.
- Children need a variety in listening experiences. Activities that require one to talk are important.
- Games of all types should be used. Games can be based on most language activities such as asking questions, giving information or instruction.
- Story telling which includes reading aloud is important for Visually Impaired learners.
- Teachers should talk about the activities being performed by them.
- Teachers should be consistent and use the same words for the same objects and actions.
- Teachers should establish realistic short-term goals for their Visually Impaired learners.

5.7 TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL

Geometrical devices: A simple geometry device can be locally made. Put a rubber mat on a wooden board, place a polythene sheet on the rubber band and draw with an ordinary ballpoint pen. Braille ruler, protector and special compass are available indigenously. With these equipments, a VI child can be enabled to draw any geometrical diagram.

Magnifiers: Low vision children require magnification. Hand-held table, spectacle, and magnifiers can be obtained locally. They can be lighted or unlighted. India has recently developed aspheric censors; their advantage is that they minimize the peripheral distention that occurs owing to high magnification. No magnifier that can magnify more than 4 to 6 times should be used because the field of vision of the VI child will be so reduced that he/she may have difficulty in smooth reading. If greater magnification is required, close circuit TV or overhead projector should be used.

Braille slate: This is usually a wooden board with holes on either side, a metal guide is fitted in these holes and it brought down as writing progresses. Each cell in the guide has six notches representing six dotes in Braille. On the top there is a clamp with pins to hold the paper in position. This is the simplest appliance used for writing in Braille.

Brailler: A brailler looks like a typewriter; it has six keys and a spacer. It is used more or less in the same way as the typewriter.

Taylor frame: This is a sheet of plastic or metal with octagonal holes. In these holes are fixed types which have a line on one side and two dots on the other. Different positions of the type represent different figures.

Abacus: An abacus is an oblong frame having 13 to 15 columns. Each column is separated by a bar technically known as centre bar. Always hold the abacus straight. The bottom portion of the centre bar contains 4 beads in each column and the upper portion of the centre bar contains one bead in each column. The abacus is to be held in such a way that the 4 beads below the centre bar are at the bottom, and the single bead above the centre bar is at the top.

Each bead in the lower portion of the abacus denotes one unit and the bead above the center bar denotes 5. Each column denotes the position of the number it represents.

The extreme right column is the units column, the second column from the right is the tens column; the third one from the right is the hundreds column, the fourth column from the right is the thousands column and so on.

Flash cards: A flash card is a device for increasing rapid recognition on recall of certain facts on ideas. It is most commonly found in arithmetic classes where classmates, with or without a teacher present, can theoretically give each other learning practice. It is too often over-used. There are some facts which can be learned through rote and can still be helpful in the future because they evoke automatic responses.

If tactual flash cards are to be used between sighted and visually disabled classmates, between two visually disabled children, or by a teacher with a VI child, they should be showed as under:

- Present flash cards rapidly; leave the stimulus exposed for no more than 4 or 5 seconds.
- Prepare the cards in Braille and ink print. Edit both right side up and upside down so that the teacher or a sighted child can sit opposite or along side the VI child and the two can work with flash cards comfortably. Also put the ink print form on the reverse side of card for maximum variety of usage.

Clip corners: Perhaps the most difficult task for teachers of Visually Impaired children is to learn to think tactually, rather than visually and develop material that is attractively arranged for sighted as well as Visually Impaired children. It is often very confusing for the Braille reader if it is just duplicated as it is.

Example: for sighted children:

Mark up "X" on all the animals on this page

Cow Sister

Plate Dog

Chicken Desk

Clock Mother

Rabbit

Horse House

Father Pillow

Chair Cat

Table Shoe

For blind children change the direction and arrangement is as follows:

Draw a line under the animals on this page.

Dog Desk Mother Horse Rabbit

Sister

Chair Table Children Clock Father

House

Cow Plate Pillow Cat Shoe

There are equal spaces between the words in each line but no attempt is made to keep the words in columns. You can also make real columns to vary the Braille patterns, as:

Rabbit	House	Table
Cow	Sister	Father
Desk	Dog	Pillow
Mother	Dish	Cat
Clock	Horse	Shoe

The following questions should be asked when preparing supplementary Braille material.

How much reading experience has the child had?

For readiness material, triple space; or even double space can be used for beginners. Later on, the spacing can be reduced even further.

Skills necessary for writing with slate and stylus

Development of prerequisite skills is of paramount importance for using slate and stylus effectively. The six dots – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 – are punched in the respective cells of the Braille slate. It is important to make sure that children understand what a cell or cells of the Braille slate mean. In order to write Braille effectively, the child should possess the following skills:

- Flexibility of fingers.
- Fine motor coordination and control of muscles.
- Competency to read familiar Braille words.

Readiness training should be given to strengthen the above skills.

The pre-requisite skills for efficient learning with the help of abacus are as follows:

- Memory of the multiplication tables for numbers 1 to 20
- Understanding the concept of complement of certain number with respect to the union specified
- Demonstrating correct finger movement in using abacus.
- Explaining the concept of cleaning and adding in abacus.
- Explaining the counting procedures in abacus.
- Demonstrating correct hand position in using abacus.
- Memory of the squares of the numbers 1 to 25.
- Memory of the square roots (perfect) of the square from 1 to 1000.
- Understanding the concept of LCM and HCF.

At the end, following skills are expected from the learner.

- Ability to formulate problem for addition of one digit, 2 digits and multiple digits and adding them in abacus.
- Ability to formulate and solve problems in subtraction.
- Ability to formulate and solve problems in multiplication.
- Ability to formulate and solve problems on multiplication of numbers involving zero, for example 609 × 35 and 201 × 98 etc.
- Ability to formulate and solve problems in division.
- Ability to formulate and solve problems in long division i.e. using four-digit numbers as dividends.

- Demonstrating the placement of whole number, numerator and denominator in addition and subtraction of fractions.
- Ability to formulate and solve at least 10 problems in fraction addition.
- Ability to formulate and solve at least 10 problems in fraction subtraction.
- Ability to formulate and solve at least 10 problems in fraction multiplication.
- Ability to formulate and solve at least 10 problems in fraction division.
- Ability to demonstrate decimal operations placement of decimal points in abacus.
- Ability to find percentage value for 10 fractions.
- Ability to find the square roots of at least 10 whole numbers and decimal numbers.
- Demonstrating the skill in using two abacuses simultaneously for complex mathematical problems.

The learners may be asked to acquire an abacus and practice various operations on it.

A) Example: 37 + 36

a) Set the number 37 in the extreme right of the abacus. In setting and clearing beads, we must be very careful in moving hands. That is, set the number 3 of the 37 in the tens column with the right hand and set the number 7 of the 37 in the units column with the same hand after setting number 3. The left hand should rest on the 3 in the tens column while the right hand is on the unit column.

b) We are going to add 36 to 37 i.e., we have to add 3 in the tens column and 6 in the units column.

c) Since three is no 3 to add in tens column in the lower abacus, we can add 5.

d) Instead of adding 3, we have added 5.

e) Subtract the excess 2 in the tens column.

f) Next, we have to add 6 in the units column. There is no 6 to add in the units column. Only two beads remain in the lower abacus.

g) Therefore, we shall go to the tens column, i.e., set a bead in the tens column. It means you have added 10 instead of 6. Therefore, subtract the complement 4 from the units column.

h) Since there are no 4 to clear in the units column, clear 5 of the upper abacus and add 1 bead in the units column in the lower abacus.

i) Count the number on the abacus. The answer is 73.

B) Example: 378 – 179

a) Set the number 378 in the extreme right. That is, set number 3 of the 378 in the hundreds column, 7 in the tens column and 8 in the units column.

b) In the given example, we have to subtract 1 in the hundreds column, 7 in the tens column and 9 in the units column.

c) Clear one bead in the hundreds column. You have 2 beads left now.

d) Clear 7 in the tens column (the left hand follows the right and rests on 2 in the hundreds column). You have no beads left now in the tens column.

e) Move both hands to the right to clear 9 in the units column. It is not possible because you have only 8 in the units column.

f) Move your hands to clear one bead in the tens column. Incidentally there is no bead left in the tens column. This is strange, isn't it? Now move your beads to left. Clear one bead in the hundreds column. This means you have cleared 100 instead of clearing 9.

g) What is the complement number of 9 with respect to 100? It is 91. This number must be added to compensate the excess. That is, add 9 beads in the tens column and one bead in the units column. In the tens column, there is no bead. So your addition results as 0+9=9. In the units column, you have the value 8 and to this value, 1 bead is added making it 9. Thus you get the answer 199.

C) Example: 38 × 29

a) Set the multiplier 38 in the extreme left.

b) Count the digits of the two numbers (multiplier and multiplicand) and add one for the abacus. In all, we have 5 digits. Therefore, set the multiplicand 29 in the last but 5th column in the right side of the abacus.

c) Keep the right hand on 9 of the 29, the left hand on 3 of the 38 and multiply.

$$3 \times 9 = 27.$$

d) Set the number 27 in the immediate right of the multiplicand. Now multiply 9 of the multiplicand and 8 of the multiplier. The product is 9 × 8 = 72. Please note this number should be added to what you have after multiplication of the previous digit 3 of the multiplicand.

e) Set the number 7 of the 72 in the tens column. You have already number 7 in the tens column. Therefore, there is no 7 to add in the tens column. Therefore, set one more bead in the hundreds column, and clear 3 beads in the tens column. Set the number 2 of 72 in the units column. Since the first step is over, clear the number 9 of the 29.

f) Multiply the number 2 of the multiplicand with the number 3 of the multiplier 38, i.e., 2 × 3 is 6. Treat this as 06. Skip one column for zero and set the number 6 in the hundreds column.

g) Multiply 2 × 8 = 16. Set the number 1 in the hundreds column. But there is no bead to add in the hundreds column. So, set one bead in the thousands column and clear nine beads in the hundreds column. Now we have to add 6 in the tens column. We have no bead there. So, add one bead in the hundreds column and clear nine beads in the tens column.

h) Clear the multiplicand and the multiplier. Now you have 1 in the thousands column. 1 in the hundreds column, 0 in the tens column and 2 in the units column. The answer is 1102.

5.8 AIDS AND APPLIANCES

These include mobility aids and mobility devices. These help in orientation and mobility of children with low vision or blindness.

5.8.1 Mobility Aids

The term orientation and mobility are commonly used in the education of the visually impaired. Generally these are used in their combined and short form "O&M". Orientation and mobility are two different words and have different meanings but are interlinked. Let's now find out what these words actually mean.

Some important sighted guide techniques are listed as follows:

1. Handgrip of the visually disabled person is a basic sighted guide technique. The grip should be just above the elbow.

2. In guiding a visually disabled person, the right-left combination of the guide and the client is important. The visually disabled person should use his right hand for holding the left hand of the sighted guide or the VI person should use his/her left hand to hold the right hand of the guide.

3. While walking, the visually disabled person should always be one step behind the sighted person for safety and graceful walking.

4. Switch side techniques are helpful for protecting the visually disabled person from obstacles in front.

5. In turning around techniques, the visually disabled person should turn from where he stands whereas the sighted person ought to make a round to guide the visually disabled person. This avoids unnecessary exposure of the visually disabled person and help him keep himself at the back of the sighted or both of them step sideways.

6. Walking in narrow space is a technique through which the visually disabled person keeps himself at the back of the sighted or both of them step sideways.

- In guiding visually disabled person on stairways, the sighted person should always be one step ahead of a visually disabled person. The visually disabled person can be asked to follow the rails (if any) of the stairways for safety.

- Battering ram technique means guiding the visually disabled person by making him place his hands on the shoulders of the sighted person while moving in very crowded places.

- *Hines break:* Accepting or refusing aid. This technique enables the visually disabled person to gracefully accept or avoid assistance, depending on his needs or desire.

- Guiding through doorways without getting bumps.

Long Cane Techniques

The long cane, popularly known as the 'white cane,' is widely used by visually disabled individuals. The cane is helpful in feeling surfaces of different textures, stairs, etc. Visually disabled persons should use certain clues and landmarks while using long cane for independent travel. A list of long cane techniques is given as follows:

a) using the cane while walking with a sighted person;
b) walking on a shore line;
c) trailing with cane;
d) diagonal technique;
e) touch technique;
f) touch and drag technique;
g) touch and slide technique;
h) three-point tap technique for walking;
i) using the cane on stairways;
j) exploration of immediate environment with the cane;
k) side stepping using the cane;
l) road crossing; safety crossing;
m) getting into a bus, car, train, or bullock cart with the long cane;
n) rural training: using kerbs while walking, drawing water from the well, etc.;
o) doorways – getting in and getting out;
p) direction talking; squaring off; and
q) using landmarks and clues for mobility.

While learn long cane techniques, the VI person should be assisted in efficient use of tactile maps. The following map reading techniques should also be developed in the visually disabled individual:

a) palm reading of directions, mental mapping;
b) clock concept for independent travel;
c) using a tactile map of the environment; and
d) knowledge about tactile symbols.

5.8.2 Mobility Devices

Canes

a) Symbol canes: It is made of light metal tubing, generally aluminium or its alloys. These canes can be folded up conveniently for carrying. This cane is popularly know as the Braille folding stick.

b) *Guide canes:* A stronger version of the symbol cane and intended to be more of a mobility aid.

c) *Long canes:* A wooden or aluminium stick of 85 to 90 cms. This aluminium cane is generally sleeved with PVC material, having a rubber grip and a nylon tip with or without a crook.

d) *Electronic travel devices (ETDs):* An ETD is described as a device that sends out signals to sense the environment within certain range or distance, processes the information received and furnishes the VI person with relevant information about the environment. Most of these devices are based on integrated circuits and emit sound or tactile signals. These electronic devices are generally not available or manufactured in India. Some of these devices are listed below:

- Lindsay-Russel E-model path sounder
- C5 laser cane
- Ultrasonic torch
- Sonic guide
- Light probes
- Mowat sonar sensor
- Nottingham obstacle sensor
- Electro- cortical prosthesis
- Electro Roft alarm
- AFBs computerized travel aid
- Polaroid ultrasonic travel aid

e) Mobility show card is a plastic show card to help visually impaired persons to cross busy roads or to hail a taxi.

f) *Mini beeper:* A battery operated hand-held electronic gadget that is useful in mobility, recreation, sports and obstacle location.

Braille Duplicators and Writers

- *Thermoform machine*

  'Indutherm' is an indigenous duplicating machine. Generally this machine is useful for taking Xerox copies of the master copy with the help Braillon sheets. It is mostly useful to take copies of tactile diagrams.

- *Braille writers*

  It is an upward writing machine for writing on one side of the paper, enabling the Braille to be read as it is written. The most popular Braillers are:

  - Stensby Braille writer
  - Perkins Brailler
  - Taj Brailler
  - Worth Perkins Brailler, and
  - Minal Brailler

- *Writing devices*

  - Interline Braille Frame
  - Taylor post card frame
  - Pocket Braille frame
  - Stylus
  - Braille Kit
  - Sketching device
  - Product design

- *Mathematical devices*

  - Taylor Arithmetic Frame
  - Arithmetic and Braille writing slate
  - Abacus
  - Talking calculator
  - Spur wheel
  - Compass set
  - Geometry mat
  - Opisometer

- *Braille reading*

  In helping Visually Impaired students read Braille, the following guidelines need to be observed:

  - Students being taught Braille must have an understanding of the spoken language
  - The children should use both the hands.
  - Placing both hands at the beginning of a line is important.
  - The left hand should move in the opposite direction and locate the beginning of the next line.
  - The students should touch the dots lightly.
  - Good two-handed readers need to acquire a light touch.
  - Clean and warm hands are important for rapid and correct Braille reading
  - Never tell a child that there are reversible pairs of letters in Braille.

- *Low vision aids*

  - VTS link
  - Visual tek
  - Schmidt reader
  - Magnifying lenses
  - Mounted magnifying lens
  - Flexible arm illuminated magnifier
  - Magnifying binoculars
  - Book magnifier
  - Illuminated magnifier
  - Paper weight magnifier
  - Super loupe
  - Eye loupe

- Head loupe
- Flash light magnifier
- Pocket magnifier
- Rayner recumbent spectacles
- Super scan reading glasses
- Windsor spherical magnifier
- Stand magnifier and
- Hand-held magnifier

Close-Circuit Television (CCTV)

Close-circuit television is used for educating of low vision students. The system includes an inexpensive television camera which is focused on the reading material. The enlarged images of the letters appear on an ordinary television set or monitor. The control of the movement of the camera and the magnification intensity and contrast of the image are under the control of the reader.

Large Print Computer (LPC)

LPC is designed especially for low vision persons. LPCs enlarge and display letters as an automatic feature and no special programme required for this. An LPC can be used with a variety of peripherals, such as printer.

5.9 CONCESSIONS/FACILITIES

A) Travel Concessions

i) By road

Many State Governments offer either full concessions or 50 % concession for travelling in states run buses.

ii) By rail

The Ministry of Railways allows the disabled persons travelling with an escort to travel by rail at concessional fare of up to 75 % in the first, the second and the sleeper classes. The concession is 50% for the season ticket for the first and the second class.

iii) By air

The Indian Airlines Corporation gives concession to blind persons but it does not give concession to orthopaedically handicapped persons. However, the orthopaedically handicapped persons are allowed to carry a pair of crutches/ braces or any other prosthetic devices free of charge.

iv) Others

Earlier, the disabled employees used to get Rs. 100 as conveyance allowance per month. The fifth Pay Commission has revised this scheme. Now persons suffering from disability affecting their lower

body get transport allowance that is double of the allowance normally entitled to them according to their pay scale.

B) Tax Concessions

i) Income tax concessions

Section 80 DD of the Income Tax Act provides for a deduction in respect of the expenditure incurred by an individual on medical treatment (including nursing), training and rehabilitation etc. of handicapped dependents. The limit of this deduction is Rs. 15,000/-.

Under Section 80 V, the parent of a disabled minor is allowed to claim a deduction up to Rs. 20,000/-.

Section 88 B provides for an additional rebate from net tax payable by a resident individual, who has attained the age of 65 years, to 20% in case the gross total income does not exceed Rs. 75,000/-.

A deduction of Rs. 20,000/- from the taxable income of the parents or guardians of handicapped children has been allowed provided this amount is deposited in any approved scheme of LIC, UTI etc.

Deduction from the total income of the handicapped persons under Section 80 U is Rs. 40,000/-

ii) Custom duty concessions

The Central Government exempts certain pre-identified categories of goods when imported into India by a loco-motor handicapped or disabled person for his personal use, from the whole of the customs duty and the additional duty subject to the condition that the importer produces to the Assistant Collector of Customs, at the time of importation, a certificate from the Civil Surgeon of the District Medical Officer or the Administrative Medical Officer or the Director of Health Services of the concerned State or a specialist in the concerned specialty attached to a Government Hospital or a recognized medical college to the effect that the importer suffers from the particular handicap or disability and that the imported goods in respect of which the exemptions are claimed are essential to overcome the said handicap or disability. The list includes:

a) Orthopedic appliances falling under heading 90.21 of the first schedule to the Customs Tariff Act.

b) Wheel chairs falling under heading No. 87.13 of the said first schedule.

C) Other Tax Concessions

Physically handicapped persons owning a motorised vehicle get exemption from paying road-tax.

i) Reservations in jobs

Since 1977, the Central Government has reserved three percent of the vacancies in lower level posts for the disabled. This reservation is not against all vacancies, but is limited to posts which the handicapped can satisfactorily manage. Several State Government and Union Territories have made similar reservations in favour of the handicapped. The handicapped population has genuinely welcomed this reservation policy. The Central Government has also set up Special Employment Exchange to exclusively register and place handicapped job seekers.

It is generally found that orthopaedically handicapped persons can handle a wide variety of jobs in most organizations. Loco-motor disabled persons do not suffer from any learning or sensory difficulty and can, therefore, handle most jobs. Field jobs which require a high degree of mobility, would however, present difficulties for them. Loco-motor disabled persons should not generally be excluded from any job and should be considered as eligible for holding all jobs other than those which are outside their physical capabilities.

Most of the jobs whether technical or non-technical can be handled by the loco-motor handicapped persons depending upon the nature of the job and the degree of the disability. Most of the undertakings/ banks and representatives of various departments are of view that persons with loss of not more that one upper limb could handle a large number of jobs both in technical and non-technical areas while persons with disabilities of lower extremities could handle jobs in which a high degree of mobility is not needed.

Jobs in Finance, Accounts, Hindi (Translation), Law and Personnel Departments can be handled by the orthopaedically handicapped.

Proper placement of the handicapped persons is not possible without identifying the suitable for employment handicapped persons.

4% vacancies are reserved for the orthopaedically handicapped persons in-Group 'C' and 'D' posts in Central Services and in comparable posts in government Public Sector Undertakings. Priority is accorded for submission to candidates by employment exchanges against Central Government vacancies for Group 'C' and 'D' posts.

Where a sufficient number of people belonging to a given category of the physically handicapped is not available, the unfilled vacancies will be carried over for a period of up to three recruitment years.

*ii) **Educational assistance schemes***
Educational Facilities/ Scholarships

Ministry of Welfare

The scheme covers scholarships for general education from Class IX onwards and for technical training at certificate, diploma and degree levels.

Department of Social Welfare

State Governments also provide scholarships to pursue education from Class I to Class VIII.

iii) Programme of Integrated Education (PIE)

The Programme of Integrated Education by placing handicapped children in ordinary schools provides for special coaching classes by qualified and specially trained teachers for every type of handicapped child. Assessment at the time of admission and later at regular intervals is a major feature of this programme.

The Central Government has taken the responsibility of meeting 100% expenditure under PIE.

iv) Fellowships

The University Grants Commission has reserved 1% of the fellowships allocated to any University for the Handicapped.

v) Admission into ITIs

In Industrial Training Institutes: The State Governments have reserved 3% seats for the handicapped under the Craftsmen Training Programme at the Centre/State level. ITIs have been instructed to identify trades from among the existing 136 trades designated under the Apprentices Act, 1961 considered suitable for Apprentice. Training of the physically handicapped and to place the maximum number of handicapped apprentices in the establishment concerned so as to achieve the overall target of 3% taking all the establishments in the public and private sectors together.

vi) Others

Handicapped persons are exempted from payment of application and examination fees as prescribed by UPSC/SSC.

Hostel facilities for physically handicapped students are provided by certain States and Union Territories.

(i) Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/ Fitting of Aids/Appliances:

The main objective of the scheme is to assist the needy physically handicapped persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and

scientifically manufactured aids and appliances that promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. The scheme is implemented through centers run by institutions registered under Companies Act, registered Societies, Trusts or any other institution recognized by the Ministry of Welfare for the purpose.

(ii) *Allotment of Accommodation on Priority Basis*

Ad-hoc allotment of general pool residential accommodation to the physically handicapped employees is allowed on request after recommendation by the special recommendation committee and on approval of the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment.

5.10 SUM UP

To summarize, we can say that visual impairment can be divided into two broad categories, i.e. low vision and blindness. Identification and assessment is vital for their rehabilitation including education of children with visual impairment. This implies direct observation of common characteristics and formal/clinical assessment through some assessment tools. Education of visually impaired child largely depends upon classroom management and teaching strategies, which include adaptation of instructional material and methods as general teaching strategies. Plus curricular and extra curricular activities come under specific teaching strategies. Equipment and teaching learning materials play a very important role in rehabilitation and education of visually impaired child. This includes simple geometrical devices, magnifiers, Braille slate, tailor frame, abacus, etc. Orientation and mobility devices are equally helpful in education and rehabilitation of children with visual impairment.

5.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. List five common characteristics of blindness.
2. Name the curricular activities, in which blind child can participate.
3. Describe in brief the measures to be taken for sitting arrangement in the class for Visually Impaired child.
4. Blindness refers to ....
5. Listening is a learned behaviour. The visually impaired children should be given .... to develop their listening skills.

5.12 FURTHER READING

1. Bhushan Punani, Nandani Rawal (2000). Visual Impairment Handbook. Blind Peoples' Association (India) Ahmedabad.
2. Mukhopadhayay, S., Jangira, N.K., Mani, M.N.G. (1987). Source Book for Training Teachers of Visually Impaired, NCERT, New Delhi.

UNIT 6 LEARNING DISABILITIES

Structure of the Unit

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This Unit will familiarize you with the concept, types of learning disabilities (LDs) and teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities. Specific strategies required to deal with particular learning disabilities have also been described.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain factors that determine learning disabilities;
- describe different kinds of learning disabilities;
- identify students with learning disabilities;
- plan teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities;
- prepare teaching-learning material suitable for LD students; and
- develop an IEP for a student with learning disabilities.

6.3 CONCEPT AND TYPES OF LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning Disability (LD) is a disorder that affects the student's ability either to interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain, despite an average or above average intellectual capacity. These limitations can show up in many ways e.g. as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control, or attention. Such difficulties extend to schoolwork and can impede the process of learning to read or write, or do mathematics.

The problems faced by students who fail to cope up with academics are not new. These students are labelled in a variety of ways such as dyslexic, slow

learners, brain damaged, learning disabled, always on the move, educationally handicapped, or poor readers. These are the students for whom school is especially challenging.

Exercise 1

What do you understand by the term 'Learning Disability'? Describe in five sentences.

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Learning disability (LD) is a hidden handicap. A learning disability does not disfigure or leave visible signs that would make others sympathetic or offer support. When compared to other major handicaps or disabling conditions, learning disabilities are the most vague and mystifying. There is still a great deal of debate about what is meant by the term "learning disabilities". Learning disabilities affect individuals differently at various stages of life-early childhood, the elementary school years, adolescence, and adulthood. In some cases, other problems coexist with learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities can also have attention problems, emotional or social problems.

> Ritesh is in class II. His parents are aware that he is poor at his studies. They feel that he is not interested in learning and wants to spend his time having fun. His father complains that Ritesh cannot even read single sentence or do simple sums of subtraction and addition. The teachers think that he is a slow learner, lazy and is disturbed. Ritesh's parents and teachers are trying hard to find a solution to his learning problems. Except for his academic backwardness, Ritesh behaves in a manner appropriate to his age in all aspects.

Activity 1

Can you write a case study of a student in your class who you think might be LD?

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Learning disabilities are of many types. A student may have difficulty in reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, language and comprehension. The most common cause of these difficulties is believed to be some minor neurological deficit, often not observed even with modern equipment

Students with learning disabilities are found in almost every classroom. They do not normally acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic from regular classroom instruction. These students have average or above-average intelligence. Their eye sight and hearing capacity are in the normal range. They are not physically handicapped, mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed. They exhibit difficulties in basic psychological processes responsible for listening, speaking, reading, writing and arithmetic. They face greater difficulty in language than in non-language areas. Teachers are likely to assume that they are mildly mentally retarded, when in fact they are not.

There are two parts to a learning disability. *First, having a learning disability means that the brain "processes" information differently than that of most other students.* Certain kinds of information get stuck or lost while being processed in the brain.

Information processing refers to how the brain

- takes in information,
- uses this information,
- stores the information in memory,
- retrieves the information from memory, and
- expresses the information.

Exercise 2

In which area of information processing, do you think students with LD have maximum problems and why?

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Second, having a learning disability causes a "discrepancy" between ability and achievement. This means that a student is a lot smarter than he/she performs in school. A student with learning disabilities appear just as smart as someone sitting next to him/her in the class, but the student's performance in certain areas is not as good. This is not because the student is stupid or lazy; it is just that the student learns differently.

Teachers often notice learning difficulties with these students but are not able to properly trace the cause of these difficulties. At the pre-school level, the

teacher may say that the student is lazy and inattentive; the class-I teacher may say that he or she needs longer readiness work; a class-II teacher may observe that the student has a reading problem; a class-III teacher may suggest remedial reading. All these suggest that the teacher recognizes the difficulty right from the early stages. Thus, a teacher should have appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with such students who would benefit from an approach that acknowledges their problem and seeks to provide solutions that would help them learn better.

Types of LD

Not all learning problems are necessarily learning disabilities. Many students are simply slower in developing certain skills because students show natural differences in their rate of development. Sometimes what seems to be a learning disability may simply be a delay in maturation. Specific criteria must be met in order to be diagnosed as a learning disability. Learning disabilities can be divided into two broad categories:

- Academic skills disorders
- Attention deficit disorders

These are briefly explained below:

Academic skills disorders

Students with academic skills disorders are often years behind their classmates in developing reading, writing, or arithmetic skills. The diagnosis in this category includes:

- Developmental reading disorder
- Developmental writing disorder
- Developmental arithmetic disorder

Exercise 3

List the kind of academic problems you find among students in your class?

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Reading disorders

This type of disorder, also known as dyslexia, is quite common. The term dyslexia, also referred sometimes as reading retardation, is used to identify students who have severe difficulty in learning to read. The student may even be two years behind his/ her expected level of reading.

Writing disorders

Difficulty in handwriting is referred to as **dysgraphia.** Students with this problem may be unable to execute necessary motor movements in order to write or copy written letters or forms. They may be unable to transfer visual information into the output of fine motor movement. They may be weak in visual- motor functions and in activities requiring visual and spatial judgments.

Arithmetic disorders

Also known as **dyscalculia**, students with this disorder show problems in understanding basic and simple mathematical concepts like addition and subtraction, and confuse sizes and symbols. These students may not be able to count on their fingers. They may show a tendency to reverse numbers.

Attention deficit disorder

Can you recall the student who just cannot sit in one place? Such students seem to act impulsively, they run into traffic or topple desks. They blurt out answers and interrupt. While playing, they are always impatient for their turn. It is hard to miss the problems of these students. Because of their constant movement and explosive energy, such hyperactive students often get into trouble with parents, teachers, and peers.

Activity 2

Form small groups of teachers and discuss the following:

Group 1 : On what basis will you identify a student having problems in reading?

Group 2 : On what basis will you identify a student having problems in writing?

Group 3 : On what basis will you identify a student having problems in doing math?

Group 4 : On what basis will you identify a student having problems in paying attention?

6.4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Identification and assessment of learning disabilities may be done on the basis of direct observation of common characteristics and with the help of a check list. Their common characteristics of students with learning disabilities have been given below:

- Fail to develop efficient and effective strategies to learn or solve problems;
- Fail to use knowledge and strategies they already have;
- Fail to develop age-appropriate learning abilities;
- Perform poorly on tests, although they understand the information;
- Have low self-esteem;

- Have performance fluctuations; and
- Be unable to generalize learnt skills.

Identification of LD

Many students who come to the formal system of schooling for the first time (i.e. first generation learners) may also exhibit problems similar to those of learning disabled students. Hence, there is a great need for a teacher to be equipped with the skills that will help him identify students who actually are learning disabled.

Since learning disability is a hidden disability, the student with learning disabilities may have similar problems as those of students with other handicaps, e.g. a student with learning disability might exhibit problems in reading very much like a visually impaired student. A student with learning disability might have problem in paying attention in the class like a hearing impaired student. A learning disabled student might need more practice and repetition of instruction as a mild mentally retarded student. Hence, a differential diagnosis for the learning disabled students becomes essential.

The following checklist can be used by the teacher to identify students with learning disabilities in the classroom:

Learning Disability	Yes	No
Is the student so destructively restless that he/ she is unable to complete the task in the same time as his/ her age peers?		
Is the student easily distracted by irrelevant activities taking place at home/ school?		
Does the student reverse letters or symbols very frequently as compared to his/her age peers while reading (example b read as d or saw as was)?		
Does the student show problems in following routines and directions?		
Does the student have acute problems with pronunciation, vocabulary and/or trouble finding the right word?		
Does the student have problems in learning shapes, colours, days of the week, numbers and letters of the alphabet?		
Does the student lose place, or repeat/ insert/ substitute/omit words too frequently while reading?		
Does the student reverse numbers very frequently while reading or writing (example 31 read or written as 13, 6 as 9)?		
Does the student confuse arithmetic signs (+ and x, < and >)		
Is the student excessively poor in calculations?		

Does the student have problems copying from other sources correctly (book/ blackboard) even though he has normal vision?		
Does the student write letters or words too close or too far (spacing problems)?		
Does the student seem to understand what is taught, but is not able to answer when questioned?		

Note: Only if the student shows any of the above 3-5 symptoms consistently, he/ she should be considered having LD. The student should also exhibit these behaviours in at least 2 situations (classroom, social or home). Moreover these symptoms become a reason for concern only if he/ she exhibits these till the age of 7. The problems as mentioned above may be in various combinations and it is also not necessary that all symptoms must be present. The presence of any one of these signs need not necessarily mean that the student has a learning disability. There may be several reasons for his inability to learn. There may be additional problems as well. It is possible that the student is unable to learn because he has a hearing difficulty, is a slow learner or is hyperactive. Therefore, before concluding that a student has a learning disability it is important to consider all aspects of development in the student.

Exercise 4

Besides a checklist, what other methods would you use to identify a student with LD? (List any two)

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Identification of Specific Kinds of LD

This section of the module will now focus on the identification of students with specific LDs like reading, writing, maths and attention problems.

6.4.1 Characteristics of Students with Dyslexia

- The first and the foremost characteristic of a student with reading problems is that he/she does not read as well as he/ she should;

- Most of the students who are low in reading ability will also be low in general achievement (i.e. in all other subjects);
- A student with reading problems may manifest so severe problems in reading that it is difficult to judge how soon he/she will improve;
- A dyslexic does not read willingly or fluently;
- A student with a reading problem cannot use written material to improve his learning; and
- Lastly, a poor reader may appear like other students of his/her age or class, but for some reason has failed to learn reading.

Identification of Students with Reading Problems

A simple checklist that can help a teacher identify a student with dyslexia is provided below:

Item	Yes	No
Does the student frequently reverse letters? (b as d, F as 7)		
Does the student frequently reverse words? (was as saw, bat as tab)		
Does the student read a word wrongly? (girl as gril)		
Does the student frequently reverse numbers? (6 as 9, 13 as 31, 28 as 82)		
Does the student repeat words while reading? (e.g. The fat, fat rat ran ran)		
Does the student have trouble in understanding what is being written or said by the teacher?		

Exercise 5

Identify and list other signs in a student's reading behaviour, which might indicate some kind of reading difficulty? Also develop a case history of a student with a reading problem.

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Handbook on Inclusive Education

Aakash is in class III. He is very bright when it comes to reading and learning in subject areas like math, social science and history. However, when it comes to writing, Aakash just freezes. Sometimes his hands start shivering as he feels that he can never write like others in his class. He misses lines while writing and writes in a way that no one can understand. At times even Aakash cannot read what he has written as his work is full of mistakes.

Do you think that you also have such a child in your class? Can you make a list of some more signs that you feel may be a kind of writing problem?

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Identification of Students with Dysgraphia

A student with writing disorders, i.e. dysgraphia:

- Has problem explaining the sequence of activities. For example, what is happening in the story/ picture?
- Has problems in dealing with questions like, "How are they alike" or "How do they differ."(i.e. compare and contrast).
- Cannot understand through writing.
- Dislikes / avoids written work in the classroom.
- Intermingles/mixes letters frequently.
- Shows inadequate sentence structure in written work.
- Has no idea of paragraph formation.
- Has untidy written work.

Exercise 6

Develop a simple checklist to identify students with writing problems. Give at least 6-7 statements. One is provided for you below:

1. Does the student reverse letters while writing?

Amita is in a public school. She is cheerful by nature, but becomes very nervous when she has to deal with numbers. To her, math is like a mental monster. She always reads 18 as 81 and often forgets symbols and shapes. Even doing simple addition is a big problem for her. She is constantly failing in math because of number confusion. Her parents make her practice everyday but are now at their wits end. Finally, they met her teacher and chalked out a special teaching programme for her.

Why according to you is Amita showing problems in maths. Give at least 3 reasons.

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Dyscalculia

The common errors that students with math problems show are as under:

- Difficulties in grasping the difference between up and down, high and low; and far and near.
- Understanding size or quantity relationships (big-small, more-less).
- Difficulties in discriminating between left and right.
- Problem in understanding number sequence.
- General difficulty with learning math symbols (+, −, ×, ÷).
- Inability to count on fingers.
- Problems with subtraction and division.
- Reversals (e.g. F for 7).
- Confusion regarding place value.
- Sequencing problems.
- Poor memory.

Do you also have students who show problems like Amita? Can you write a few more of these problems?

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Attention Problems

Symptoms of students with attention problems:

- Often fidgets with hands or feet or moves about on his/her seat.
- Has difficulty remaining seated and still, when required to do so.
- Is easily distracted by irrelevant things happening around him/her.
- Has difficulty waiting for his/her turn in games.
- Often gives answers to questions before they have been completed.
- Has difficulty playing quietly.
- Often talks excessively.
- Often interrupts or disturbs others, when they are doing something (e.g., a student with attention problems may spoil other student's games).
- Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities at school or at home (e.g., toys, pencils, books, assignments).
- Often engages in physically dangerous activities without considering possible consequences (not for the purpose of seeking thrill), e.g., runs into street without looking.

Activity 3

Develop a simple checklist for identification of students with attention problems. An example is given below:

It is difficult for the child to sit on his/her seat continuously for even two minutes.

6.4.2 Assessment

After identification, the next step is to evaluate the student with a view to obtain comprehensive information about his/her learning patterns. Have you thought why assessment is important? Well, here are a few reasons:

- Assessment of students with learning disabilities gives an idea about the areas in which the student is performing poorly (e.g. reading, writing, calculations);
- Helps identify problems, other than educational, that a student has e.g. social, emotional, behavioural;
- Provides an idea of the kind of support a student might need;
- Aids educational planning on the basis of collected information; and
- Helps evaluates the student's progress after providing the required support.

Reena: The child always on the move

Eight years old Reena is a bright and active girl. Over the past six months, her parents and teachers have found working with her a frustrating experience. Recently, she has been losing her patience and her body is constantly on the move.

Her teacher reports that Reena has difficulty sustaining attention on a task. She usually finishes her work quickly and then moves around in the class. She sometimes pulls somebody's hair or scribbles on some of her classmates' notebooks. Her teacher says that Reena often switches from one activity to another rarely completing the ones she has been working upon. She interrupts other students and also seems to dominate the group conversation. She often seems not to hear, in spite of normal hearing and does not follow directions well. Reena, to her parents, also seem to have excessive energy. Her parents and teachers find it difficult to handle her. They seem to be losing control of the situation and are looking for ways to help Reena.

Give 5 more symptoms that you think a student with attention problems might exhibit in the classroom?

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Can you also think of some other reasons for assessment of LD students?

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A student with learning disability needs three kinds of assessments:

- General assessment;
- Functional assessment; and
- Specific assessment.

These can be done with the help of:

- worksheets,
- a checklist, and
- direct observation by teachers/parents or any one else involved in the education of the student.

Worksheets

Worksheets are developed on academic subjects and these can give information about a student's behaviour during a specified period of time. The student works on the worksheet for some time and the teacher notes correct and incorrect responses and error patterns. A sample of the worksheet in math that can be used with LD students is provided below:

73 × 13

a) 946 b) 219 c) 949 d) 292

9878 – 2347

a) 12225 b) 7531 c) 7351 d) 531

The student has to mark the correct answer. Repeated incorrect responses, after enough practice and efforts by the teacher, can reveal a possible problem faced by the student in doing mathematical calculations.

Activity 4

Create simple worksheets in maths, spelling and reading according to the guidelines described above, and distribute these among the teachers in your school asking them to assess some students who they feel may have a learning problem.

Sample sheet 1 : Worksheet in Maths
Sample sheet 2 : Worksheet on Spelling
Sample sheet 3 : Worksheet in Reading

Checklist

A checklist comprises a series of statements that imply or provide information about the student's performance or learning characteristics. For example, a checklist used for learning disabled students can comprise the following statements:

1. …………… The student has problems in understanding math problems involving more than one step.
2. ………… The student comprehends the main ideas of stories.
3. ……….. The student frequently asks for the directions to be repeated.
4. ……….. The student is frequently off-task when expected to perform quietly.
5. ………… The student has problems waiting in a queue and pushes other students around.

Checklists are flexible and can be used in any problem area such as reading, writing or arithmetic.

Direct Observation

Careful observation of students in the classroom by teacher is very valuable for assessing LD students. When walking around the classroom, you as a teacher, must watch the student performing the assigned work. For example, while moving around in the classroom, you may see a student doing arithmetic sums in the following manner:

$$\begin{array}{r} 17 \\ -\ 8 \\ \hline 11 \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r} 13 \\ -\ 4 \\ \hline 11 \end{array}$$

Direct observation of such a student reveals that he is subtracting the larger number from the smaller number without understanding its place value and therefore needs help. Direct observation can be used in any area of concern.

Exercise 7

List five additional advantages of direct observation.

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Functional Assessment of a Learning Disabled Student

Besides, the teacher should also have some idea about the functional level of a student. Functional level simply means the level at which the student is learning. This ability of a learning disabled student can be assessed in the following way:

Evaluating the Level of Learning Disabled Students

You can easily identify students who are apparently average or above average in intelligence but show fluctuation in their performance. For example, sometimes these students may perform well on a test and at other times perform poorly in different subjects or in oral and written work. A teacher can devise simple methods to carry out their functional assessment, as provided below:

Time concept

- Teacher can also ask students "What time is it now?"
- At what time do you have your lunch?

Calendar quiz

Provide the student with a calendar and a worksheet with numerous questions. Ask the student to respond to questions like the following:

- How many days are there in a week?
- On what day is the 27th of May?
- List the dates of all the Wednesdays in January.
- How many months are there in a year?

The teacher can use different fruits, numbers and things and ask the student to name them or the student may be asked to guess the names of different animals from their masks.

The basic idea is to know the student's level of functioning and identify areas where help is needed.

Activity 5

Ask a group of your colleagues to gather together for a discussion and ask them to suggest some activities that you can use in your classroom to assess a student functionally? At the end of this activity you should have list at least six new ideas.

Specific Assessment

Once the background and information about the general ability of the student is obtained, then assessment can be focused on specific areas like reading, writing, math and attention. Simple checklists and worksheets can be developed in these areas or a teacher can directly observe the kind of errors a student makes in each area. Additional assistance may then be provided to the

student depending on the area in which the student's level of performance is much below average.

If you feel that a student has some serious problems in learning, the first important management rule is "Do not become unduly anxious or take out your anger on the student". Ask for help. There are methods by which these students can be taught to learn effectively. Talk regularly with parents of other students with similar problems. Remember you are not alone in this.

6.5 TEACHING STRATEGIES

This unit describes some general learning strategies that can be used by teachers with student LD.

6.5.1 General Strategies

This includes the following:

Task analysis: The teacher can choose learning task appropriate for the student to master. Its final objective(s) should be stated clearly. The final goal is broken down into smaller steps arranged in ascending order of difficulty, with each item being a pre-requisite for the subsequent one until the final goal is attained.

For example, in teaching a student how to identify the red colour, the following steps may be involved: (i) matching red coloured objects from a group of objects of three or more colours; (ii) pointing to red colour from a group of objects of red and blue colours, when presented in any order; (iii) pointing to red colour from a group of objects of red, green and blue colours, when presented in any order; and (iv) pointing to red colour from a group of objects of red, green, yellow and blue colours, when presented in any order.

Exercise 8

Give two examples of how to conduct task analysis.

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Structured lesson presentations

Students with learning disabilities achieve more when lessons taught to them are clearly presented, well sequenced and well organized. Explanations should be concise and clearly understood with key concepts properly highlighted. Content and way of presentation should vary according to each student's unique abilities and weaknesses. In other words, the lessons should suit the needs of the student.

General Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities

- Show, demonstrate and model;
- Utilize multi-sensory learning;
- Avoid distracting surroundings;
- Break information down into smaller units and present it;
- Allow plenty of time to the students to work a task as they have poor time management skills;
- Practice on newer tasks in the beginning should be for shorter periods of time;
- Utilize peer tutoring and cooperative learning. In peer tutoring, allow the student with a learning disability to play the role of a tutor as well;
- Use a developmentally appropriate approach;
- Make information as concrete as possible;
- Provide small group instruction;
- Read test materials to the student;
- Find out how the student learns best and utilize this learning channel/style;
- Encourage students to reason and honour the way they think and feel about a certain situation or an event; and
- Praise and encourage students and key words for channelising their efforts in the right direction.

Exercise 9

Briefly describe how you would structure your presentation if you are to teach a lesson from Hindi textbook?

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Organized equipment and materials

The teacher must properly organize the equipment and materials needed before starting a lesson. The teacher should ensure that the equipment and materials are relevant, easy to comprehend and related to the material that is being taught to students.

Peer teaching

This strategy is also known as child-to-child approach. In this strategy, one student who has proficiency in a skill, a subject or area teaches another student who has problem in learning a concept in that area on a one-on-one basis. A competent student is paired with one who has difficulty in a given academic area. Tutoring may also be cross-age in which an older student gives instruction to a younger student. Usually the tutor with average or above average ability teaches a student with equal or lower ability.

Multi-sensory approach

The multi-sensory approach is based on the premise that some students learn best when content is presented in more than one modality. All modalities such as kinesthetic (i.e. related to movement of the body), LD touch stimulation along with visual and auditory senses are used to make learning more effective for student. In this approach, the student sees, feels, says and hears the content. The multi-sensory techniques that include tracing, hearing, writing and seeing are often referred to as VAKT (visual-auditory-kinesthetic-tactile). In this approach, embossed letters, models, visual aids, blocks, puzzles and other teaching learning material can be used.

Exercise 10

List three advantages of using multi-sensory approach.

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Co-operative learning (CL)

Co-operative learning is an instructional arrangement in which small groups or teams of students work together to achieve team success in a manner that promotes student responsibility for their own learning as well as the learning of others. For example, four students can be placed in a group such that one is a high achiever, two are average achievers and one is a low achiever. It has been seen that all students benefit from this experience which means that not only the low achievers benefit from co-operative learning, but also the high achiever show significant gains. Cooperative learning can also be used in cross age and multi-grade settings.

Activity 6

Briefly describe how you would use cooperative learning in your classroom.

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6.5.2 Specific Strategies

These strategies involve the use of methods which can help correct the student's spoken or written language and word identification. In other words, these methods are meant to raise the student's level of reading to that of other students in the class.

A few of these remedial strategies are given below:

Drill Card Method

This method uses multi-sensory approach. The sound of each letter is taught through this approach. Letters having one sound can be presented on the drill or flash cards. A book of printed letters can also be shown to the student. This will help the student note resemblance between the printed and the written word. This technique involves the following procedure:

- A flash card showing one letter only is shown to the student.
- The teacher then makes the sound represented by the letter.
- The teacher then writes the letter for the student gradually, explaining how it is formed. The student traces the letter and copies it. The student then learns and writes the letter without looking at the letter by the teacher or the printed letter,
- After the student has learnt about 10 letters in this way, he/she is now ready to combine these letters to form words.
- When the teacher speaks a letter, the student repeats the word, names the letter, writes the letter as he speaks it and reads the word he has formed himself.

New concepts and vocabulary should be introduced gradually

- While reading, put questions to the student to enhance his perception of the content.
- Use worksheets; these are useful in strengthening reading skills.
- Read aloud to students regularly.
- Provide meaningful reading material such as dictionaries, categorised lists of words.
- Let the student read aloud (oral reading). If the student makes mistakes these can be easily identified by the teacher and corrected later on.
- Reading can be done with peers or with parents (paired reading). This will enhance the student's confidence.
- Read as a group (choral reading). Here the students get both auditory and visual stimuli to correct themselves.
- Use of colour helps provide some useful hints to students who have problems with reading. For example, if the student confuses between b and d, b could be coloured with green and d with red.
- Have the whole class read aloud together.

Joint Oral Learning Method

This method is considered to be very effective with students with severe reading difficulties. It aims to help the student attain fluent reading automatically. This method comprises joint oral learning at a rapid pace by both the teacher and the student. It is generally believed that a student can learn better by hearing his own voice as well as someone else's voice jointly reading the same material. In this method, the student sits in front of the teacher so that the teacher's voice while reading its to heard by the student. Moreover, the student can also see how the teacher reads the text. This method requires no special preparation and both the student and the teacher can read as many pages as they want to. The steps in this method are as listed below:

- The teacher first reads loudly and at a normal pace.
- The student is encouraged to read along with the teacher without worrying about the mistakes.
- The teacher then slides the finger to locate the words as they are read.
- As the student picks up pace, the teacher can lower his/ her voice.
- The student can then use his/ her finger to point to the word being read. Thus, the student slowly takes over the reading.

The use of visual aids such as charts and pictures with these students is of prime importance. A simple way to teach reading with the help of a picture would be as follows:

- Project the picture on the board.
- Label objects in the picture.
- Ask the student to read these words.
- The student may also be asked to narrate a story based on the picture.
- Small groups can also be formed in which all students read together.

Exercise 11

Briefly describe two remedial strategies that you would like to use in your classroom and why?

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Briefly describe three activities through which you will teach reading to your students.

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6.5.3 Remedial Strategies

Students with writing problems require the use of some special methods which can help improve their writing. Several remedial methods have been designed for students with writing problems. But before teaching writing to a student, it is important to see that these students have developed their readiness skills. In other words, the student should be able to connect dots on the paper; perform hand movements such as up-down, left- right; draw vertical and horizontal lines and different geometric shapes such as circle, line.

Remedial Strategies for Writing

Cover – Write Method

This is another multi sensory method with the following steps:

- The student looks at the word and says it.
- The student then writes the word by looking at it, may be twice or thrice
- The student covers the word and writes it from memory
- Checks the spelling himself/ herself.

Imitation Method

This method is meant for students with severe writing problems. The steps in this method are as follows:

- The teacher/parent first spells the word and provides the model written form of the word.
- The student imitates the model by spelling the word and writing it.
- The student receives immediate positive feedback (praise) if the response is correct.
- If the response is incorrect, the student is taught again and the above two steps are repeated.

Guidelines for Teaching Writing

- Sufficient time should be given for writing activities
- Expose students to a broad range of writing material.
- Students should be given such writing activities as give them an opportunity to express themselves.
- The teachers while teaching various lessons should also inform the students about the characteristics of good writing.
- Peers with good writing could also become models for those students who manifest problems with writing.
- After the student has completed a written exercise, he/she should be encouraged to edit it also. This helps the student in detecting and correcting his/her mistakes.
- The teacher should also watch the student's posture, pencil grip and position of the paper when a student is writing.
- Encourage the student to draw patterns. This helps the student in dealing with his/her inability to track words properly.
- The arm movement of the student should also be closely watched
- Tape letter forms to the floor. Have students play with them in any manner they like
- Have students describe the formation of the letter as it is being written. This provides students valuable auditory reinforcement.

Stages of Learning in Students with Writing Problems

While overcoming their writing problems, students normally pass through the following four stages:

- The stage of minimal communication: In this stage, the student may write simple utterances and the writing is usually very brief.
- The stage of gradual increase in the number of statements.
- The stage of sequencing: The student learns sequencing and does not write the ideas in the order they come to his/ her mind, but gives them some meaning.
- The stage of writing with comprehension: Lastly, meaning and comprehension of written work is initiated and writing becomes logical and inter-linked.

Some Activities that can enhance Writing Skills

Action cards

These cards consist of some pictures to encourage the use of action words and short sentences.

Say what you see on cards

These cards have pictures which the student is asked to explain and describe orally. The student can then be asked to describe them in writing.

Sequential cards

The students are asked to put the cards in an order so that they make a story. The student can then be asked to write the story.

Classification of objects

The students are exposed to a random list of animals and fruits. For example cat, apple, dog, mango. The students can then be asked to sort them in appropriate categories.

Picture Matching and Word Matching Cards

The student can be shown cards with pictures and words and asked to match the picture with the word that best describes it. The student can then be asked to spell the words from memory and then write them.

Some simple tips for the Teacher

- Ensure that the position of the paper is correct, it should be in line with the writing arm;
- The position of the paper will differ for a right-handed and a left-handed student. The teacher, while teaching how to write, should keep this in mind;

- Use activities such as tracing over small letters, colouring within given space i.e. outline, restrict movement of the whole arm to that of the wrist;
- For proper pencil grip, the wrist should rest on the paper. Only the fingers should move and the hand must not move from this point;
- Ask the student to maintain correct hand movement i.e. ensure the movement of the wrist is neither too rigid nor the grip too tight;
- Check the arm movement of the student;
- Encourage students to draw patterns. This will help them deal with problems related to tracking;
- Ask students to use visual memory and correct directionality;
- Use activities that will improve the memory of the student, like asking a student practice on those particular areas more in which he/she is weak; and
- Ask students to maintain correct posture, their back should be erect and shoulders relaxed.

Exercise 12

Describe two remedial strategies that you may have been using or would like to use with your students.

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b) ....

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Exercise 13

Develop a case history of a student with poor handwriting and how it improved after you used some strategies for helping him improve it.

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Guidelines for Teaching Mathematics

- Use concrete material such as buttons, straws, seeds, pebbles and beads to teach students how to count.
- Teacher should use a lot of visual aids to teach simple mathematical operations and concepts.
- Activity worksheets are also useful in teaching mathematics/ mathematical problems to students with learning disability who have difficulty in mathematics.
- Give a small number of problems to these students. These students can also be given some extra time to complete mathematics assignments.
- Playing cards can be used to teach computation skills to students. Some simple games could also be developed with the help of playing cards.
- Blocks, puzzles and word games are always helpful in making the process of learning mathematical concepts more joyful for the student.
- Use of colours can provide some useful hints. Highlighters can be used to specify directionality and signs (+, ×).
- Display charts that explain the process signs and tell what the key words indicate in word problems. They help to students having problems with mathematics.
- Have students use an abacus to facilitate counting make calculations etc.
- Use of colours (green means 'multiplication' and red means 'addition') can prevent the students from getting confused about numbers, symbols and signs.

Mathematics

The strategies described in the section on reading and writing can be used for Mathematics as well. However, in this section, a few fun filled activities for teaching Mathematics are described.

Number readiness

Before teaching numbers, it is necessary that students should be given specific activities/ experiences related to number work, e.g.

a) Classification/sorting

b) Sequential thinking

c) Problem solving

d) Pre-number concepts –

- Big-small
- Tall-short
- More-less
- Thick-thin
- Heavy-light
- Far-near
- Long-short
- Wide-narrow
- Left-right
- Low-high, etc.

Big – small

Make students stand in a circle holding their hands. The teacher says 'Form a small circle'. The students move inwards and when she says 'Form a big circle', they spread out.

Tall – short

The teacher divides the students into group of five and asks them to run around, while she claps. When the teacher stops clapping, students have to stand in a line in order of their height i.e. 'tallest to shortest'.

More-less and Heavy-light

While conversing with students, the teacher should ask how vegetables, cereals, pulses are bought from the market. Then with the help of a balance and some weights, the teacher can demonstrate this activity in the classroom. The teacher should ask, "how are milk and oil bought? How does the shopkeeper measure these things?" The teacher can encourage students to dramatise / role play the role of a shopkeeper. For this, a makeshift balance made of 'lids of polish boxes' can be used to weigh sweets made of clay and pebbles).

Students can be asked questions related to their daily lives e.g., "Where does your mother go to buy cloth for you?" "What does the shopkeeper use to measure cloth?" and "When do you go to the tailor to get your dress stitched?" "What does he use to take your measurement?" The actual tape should also be shown in the class.

Students, may now be ready to play the role of a tailor. One student could become the tailor, and others could pretend to visit his shop as customers. Other variations of this activity could be about carpenters, or a dairy etc.

Note: Draw the students attention to the fact that certain things are measured in kilograms e.g. vegetables, cereals, fruits, etc. But some others are counted and sold by the dozen e.g. oranges and banana. Liquids e.g. milk and oil are measured in litre(s).

Maths movement games

Number identification

Once students have been exposed to number identification, they should be provided with many practice activities to reinforce their newly acquired skills. Students usually enjoy skill practice using game formats. It is important to have the students play games designed for their current skill level, otherwise the activity may become too easy or too frustrating for them.

Example: Using numbers 11 to 20 when the student has not yet learnt numbers 1 to 10 will be frustrating for the student and thus not be an interesting activity.

Game 1: Look and Match

Place chart paper squares with numbers on the ground in front of a few students. The teacher writes a number on the chalkboard, and the students are to jump on the appropriate matching number in front of them. Variations of this format could be used in different locations e.g. in the playground.

Note: Use those numbers only that the students can identify correctly.

Exercise 14

Describe how you would teach a student with a problem in Math the concept of time.

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Teaching Students with Attention Problems

Some students have problem in paying attention, and it is very important to develop a routine for them in their everyday activities. They may benefit from a classroom where not too many things are happening at the same time. At home too, parents should be careful to keep the child's room uncluttered and free of too many things. This will reduce the child's distraction and will encourage the student to pay attention to the relevant things.

How to increase attention span of students

Students with attention problem are likely to have a short attention span. They may initially attend to a task, but their attention soon begins to wander. Teachers can take steps to keep such students' attention, and prolong their concentration on the tasks at hand. *These include shortening the task, making tasks more interesting and increasing the novelty of the task, in the following ways:*

Shorten the task

Teachers can accommodate students with attention problems by shortening the tasks. Some ways of achieving this are:

- Break the task into smaller parts to be completed at different times; allow whispering the other during work; set two tasks and task should be the one the student prefers to work on after finishing the less preferred task.
- Assign fewer problems; (for example, fewer spelling words or mathematics problems).
- Try to use fewer words when explaining tasks.
- Give short directions.
- Organize more short duration, spaced practice sessions and give fewer and shorter assignments.
- Give a student frequent breaks when he/she is assigned a task.

Make tasks more interesting

When students are intensely interested in something, their attention span can be amazingly long. For example, a student will spend hours at his favourite hobby. Remember that obtaining "on-task" behaviour is not in itself a useful goal. Attention should be a natural result, not a goal to be attained, so change the nature of the task or the learning environment as needed. The following strategies make tasks more engaging:

- Encourage students to work with partners, in small groups, or at interest centers;
- Alternate highly interesting and less interesting tasks; and
- Use visual aids (flash cards, etc.) when teaching.

Educational interventions

- Reward the student for being attentive by allowing him/ her to participate in his favourite activities, conferring classroom privileges (like making the student monitor of the class);
- Establish routines for placing objects especially routinely used objects such as books or assignments;
- Point out the salient features of the assignments (topic sentences, headings or table of contents);
- Provide the student with a list of materials needed for each task. Limit the list to only materials necessary to complete the task;
- Enhance the clarity of instructions. Repeat as many times as necessary in a clear and calm tone;
- Shorten the task by breaking it into smaller parts to be completed;
- Make the tasks more interesting;
- Increase the novelty of the task by using a game format; and
- Use curriculum materials that arouse interest.

Tasks that are new, unique, or unusual are inherently more appealing and more likely to capture a student's attention. For longer tasks or tasks that are necessarily repetitive, increasing their novelty value is especially important. To add novelty, try using a game format for the task. Games add fun and novelty to learning, especially when material to be learned is for concept development (i.e., word recognition or math facts). A few games have been described in the latter part of this module.

Exercise 15

Can you recall a child with attention problems in your class? Describe the details of the student and what you could do to improve his concentration and attention. Did you unknowingly use some of the strategies mentioned above, or did you use some other techniques. Give below a list of what you did and why.

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Exercise 16

List three joyful activities that you can use in your classroom to improve a student's attention span.

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6.6 TEACHING LEARNING MATERIAL

A student with LD will need concrete TLM, either procured or prepared by the teacher. The aim is to use TLM to teach a student with LD so that he can learn concepts more effectively. Hence, a teacher should remember the following while developing TLM for a student with LD:

- It should match the learning level of students;
- It should be related to a student's environment;
- It should be easy to prepare;

- It should facilitate learning in curricular and other areas;
- It should be attractive;
- It should be easily accessible to all students;
- It should promote the group as well as self-learning;
- It should be safe and easy to handle;
- It should use colours, pictures and embossed material; and
- It should be easily demonstrated by teachers.

Some of the TLMs for LD are the following:

- Self-learning cards
- Picture cards
- Magazines/newspapers/calendars/posters/puzzles/ riddles
- Community made dolls/ toys/ puppets
- Models
- Raised letters/ numbers
- Concrete objects (beads/ buttons)
- Colours
- Word building/word concepts
- Flash cards
- Stencils
- Picture arrangement cards
- Masks
- Banners
- Fixing blocks
- Playway kit
- Maps/globes
- Worksheets/workbooks
- A pencil grip
- Educational games and toys

This is just an illustrative list. Many more such materials can be developed for use by students with LD.

Support Services for LD

Ideally, students with severe LD require support services in the form of:

- Remedial individualized instruction
- Teaching-learning material (TLM)
- Effective pedagogical strategies

All these have been discussed earlier under teaching strategies on LD and TLM for LD.

6.7 INDIVIDUALISED EDUCATION PROGRAMME

An example of IEP is given below:

(Part – A)

Regd. No.	:	SSA-U.P./222/IED
Name	:	Anita Kumari
Date of IEP	:	24/11/2004
Date of Birth	:	20/07/98
Address	:	38-D, Mall Block, U.P.
School	:	Prathmik Vidyalaya, Mall Block, U.P.
Class	:	I
Mother Tongue/ Language	:	Hindi
Kind of disability	:	Learning disabilities
Significant Information	:	Anita was first screened by her regular teacher who observed that Anita was not learning like other students and her performance varied a lot. She was then assessed by a resource teacher. The assessment report mentioned that Anita could be integrated in a regular school with support services from the resource teacher or a trained regular teacher. Anita does not have any major behavioural problem.
Cause of Disability	:	Anita's mother took strong medicines during pregnancy
Associated Conditions	:	Nil
Referred by for an IEP	:	Parents and General Teacher
Annual Goals	:	*Academic:* • To improve attention span so that Anita completes the task assigned to her without any help • Anita should learn functional academics like identification of coins, identification of fruits and vegetables etc.

(Part – B)

Date of evaluation: *30/01/2004*

Date of initiation: *24/11/2004*

Activity identification	:	Identification of 50 paise and 1 rupee coins. Anita would be expected to sustain her attention on a task for at least 15 minutes.

Current level	:	The student can sort out coins from other objects. She can work on a task but is distracted easily due to which she cannot complete her task.
Objective/ short-term goal	:	When coins of different values are given, Anita will be asked to pick up 50 paise and 1 rupee coins. She will be expected to pick up 50ps. coin and 1 rupee coin, 8 out of 10 times correctly after 3 months.
Objectives of the Meeting	:	Anita's progress on identification of coins and sustainability of attention would be assessed.
Support services/materials needed	:	Different coins, chess-board, work sheets, resource teacher support, colours etc.
Procedure	:	For identification of coins, the resource teacher used the following procedure: • Different coins were kept in front of the student. Anita was shown 50 paise and 1 rupee coins and asked to pick up the same type and give it to the teacher. • She was told the values of 50 paise and 1 rupee coins and also their shapes when compared with other coins. • A mock shopping game was played. Different eatables were kept and the student was given some coins. For each eatable, the teacher showed 50 paise and 1 rupee coins and Anita chose coins of the same kind from her own lot and gave these to the teacher. • The teacher asked Anita to place 1 rupee coin on the white part of the chess board and 50 ps. coin on the black square. • She was also taken to the school canteen to buy things, for which she will pay 50 ps. or rupee 1 for the items she selected.

		• To improve Anita's attention, the teacher realized that using colours kept Anita on-task. Thus, she gave her a box of colours. Anita would then pay more attention to tasks assigned.
Reward	:	Verbal and non- verbal praise or signs of appreciation liked by the student like "Good job!" and pat on the back.
Evaluation	:	Student rating scale was used with Anita A - Accomplished S - Satisfactory progress L - Little progress U - Unsatisfactory progress due to U1: Lack of motivation U2: Frequent absence U3: Inappropriate behaviour U4: Goal inappropriate at this time U5: Any other.
Comments of the IEP Team (Anita's regular teacher, resource teacher, parent(s), if possible, and headmaster of the school)	:	Anita can identify coins. This activity should be done with more coins and other objects used in day-to-day life. More tangible rewards should be used with Anita. Anita can sustain her attention using colours. Now use of colours should be faded and her attention level further assessed.
Date of next IEP Meeting	:	The next meeting would on 15th January 2006 to review Anita's progress on annual goals, based on the suggestions provided by the team.

6.8 SUM UP

Learning disabilities can affect a child of any age at any stage of his/her life. This unit provides information on the concept as well as different kinds of learning disabilities. Learning disabilities that usually affect children are in the areas of reading, writing, maths and attention deficit. The overall comprehension ability of the child is also affected. Hence, a teacher has to be especially careful in identifying these children. Some tips on how to identify LD children have been given in this unit. Besides, children with learning disabilities require effective pedagogical strategies like peer tutoring, co-operative learning etc. Remedial teaching is useful for children with LD if their reading, writing and math skills have to be improved. Remedial teaching coupled with joyful teaching methods does help such a child to cope with

his/her learning disabilities. However, the most important factor for those children is encouraging support from parents and teachers.

6.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

1. Reading disorders are commonly known as__________
2. ________ teaching is important for children with LD.
3. There are _________ types of LD.
4. __________ is the type of behaviour disorder that affects the learning ability of a child.
5. LD is a ___________related problem.

Match the following:

Learning disabilities	is normal, but has problems in understanding what is being taught.
A child with a LD	encouraging towards children with LD.
Reading, writing and math problems can be improved through	can affect a child of any age.
Teachers must be	should work as partners.
Parents and teachers of LD children	remedial teaching.

6.10 FURTHER READING

1. Chadha, A. (2001). A Guide to Educating Children with Learning Disabilities. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House.
2. Gearheart (1985). Learning Disabilities: Educational Strategies: MI. USA.Time Co./ Mosby College Publishing.
3. Mercer, D. (1991). Students with Learning Disabilities. Merrill Publishing Company.
4. Mercer, D. and Mercer, R. (1985). Teaching Children with Learning Problems. Merrill Publishing Company and a Bell & Howell Company, OH: USA.

UNIT 7 BARRIER-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Structure of the Unit

7.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that a **Barrier Filled Environment** creates a feeling of insecurity/anxiety not only in the minds of the parents but also the child. Inaccessibility results in drastic reduction in the number of admissions of CWSN to mainstream schools. if admitted, CWSN dropout very often from schools without barrier-free environments.

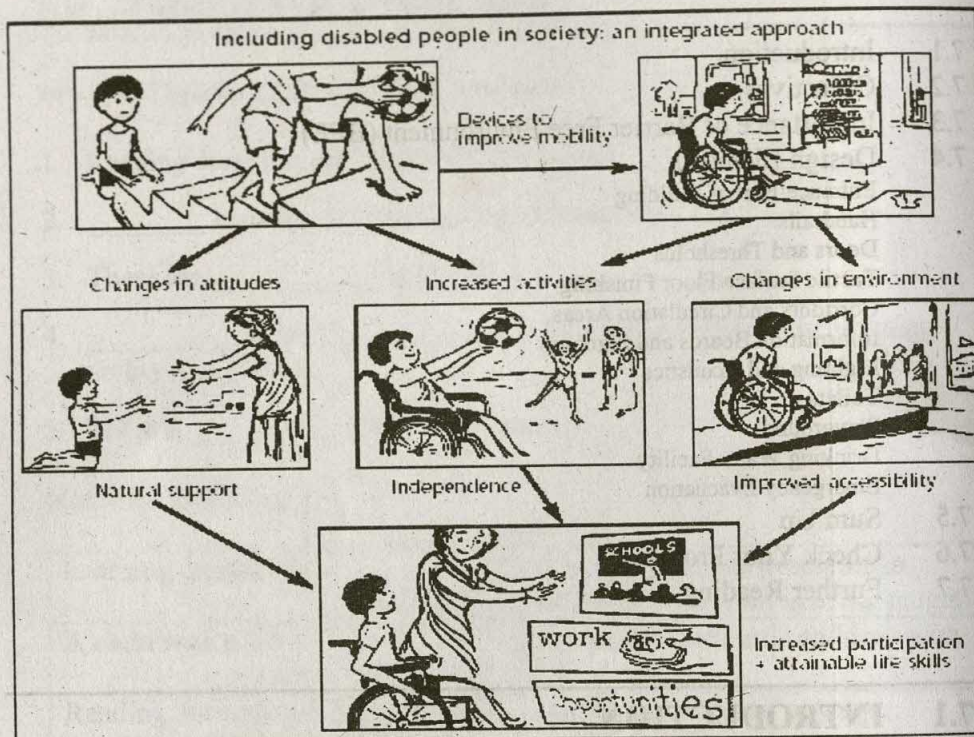
Opening doors to CWSN for inclusive education makes a society which is inclusive of everyone and not just a few! Various measures need to be adopted to create an accessible and friendly environment for CWSN who may:

- require the use of wheelchairs;
- have difficulty in walking and may require the use of braces, crutches, walking frame or other means of support;
- have total or partial impairment of hearing or sight;
- have poor or limited coordination of movement; and/or
- have a weak grip.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, we will be able to:

- explain the concept of barrier free environment; and
- justify and appreciate the importance and design of making the school accessible to CWSN.

7.3 IMPORTANCE OF BARRIER FREE ENVIRONMENT (BFE)

Planning of BFE should focus on routes the child with SEN will take. For example: entrance/exit of building, classroom areas, library, assembly hall, auditoria, toilets/bathroom, lunchroom/canteen, and the playground.

Some specific BFE checks include:

- Identifying areas that might be difficult for a CWSN e.g. entrance, toilets, libraries etc;
- Planning strategies for enabling CWSN to negotiate/use spaces;
- Clearing pathways and corridors;
- Organizing furniture in the classroom for greater mobility and access; and
- Defining areas by mats or floor tiles.

7.4 DESIGN ELEMENTS*

The following design elements need to be considered when creating a barrier-free environment:

- Entrances and exits of the building
- Handrails
- Doors and thresholds
- Tactile/Floor finishes
- Corridors and circulation spaces
- Information boards and signages
- Lighting and acoustics
- Toilets

- Play grounds
- Drinking water facilities
- Emergency evacuation

*All measurements indicated in this unit are in millimeters (mm).

7.4.1 Entrance/Exit of Building

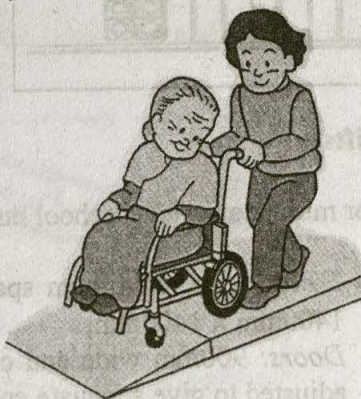
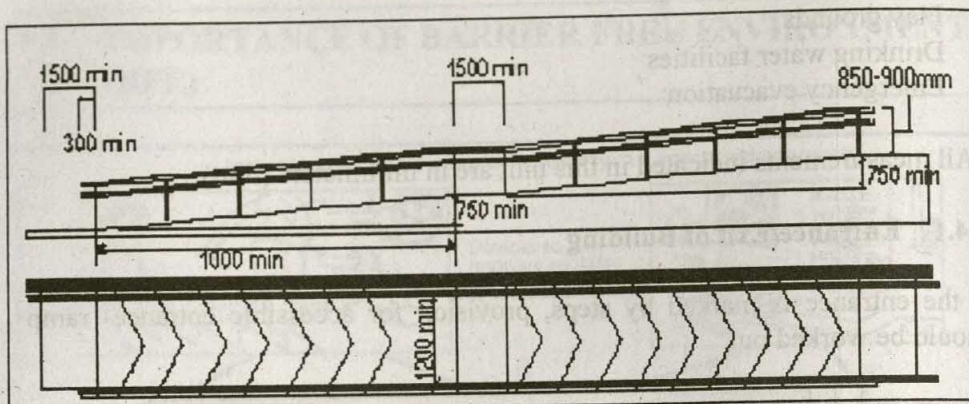
If the entrance is marked by steps, provision for accessible entrance- ramp should be worked out.

Ramps

A ramp suitable for wheelchair users and children with other mobility impairments, should not be steeper than 1:12, otherwise it would be difficult for these children to move the wheelchair or walk up/down a ramp.

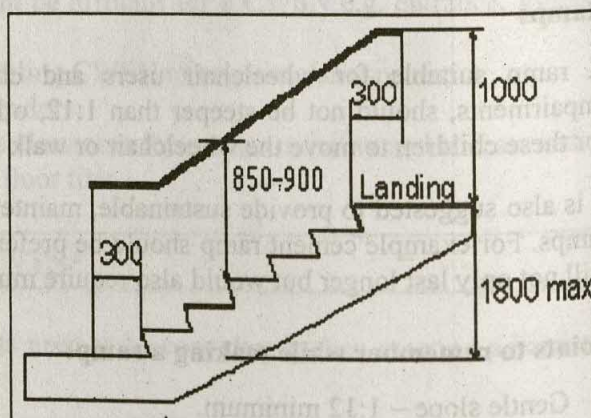
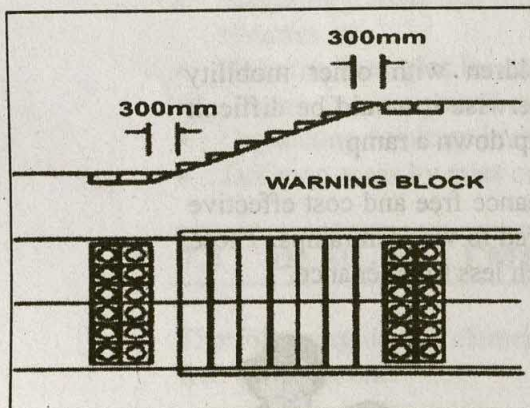
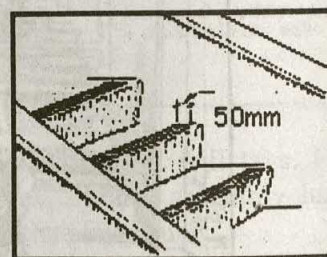
It is also suggested to provide sustainable, maintenance free and cost effective ramps. For example cement ramp should be preferred to wooden ramps. These will not only last longer but would also require much less maintenance.

Points to remember while making a ramp:

- Gentle slope – 1:12 minimum.
- Maximum rise in a single run: 750mm.
- Minimum clear width: 1200mm
- Surfaces (ramp + landing) should be slip-resistant.
- Handrails to be provided on both sides at a height of 850mm-900mm; both ends to be rounded and grouted and to extend 300mm beyond top and bottom of the ramp.
- A ramp should be accompanied by a flight of easy-to-climb steps.

Staircases and Steps

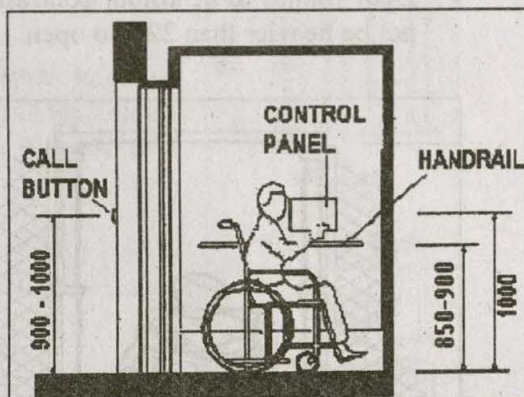
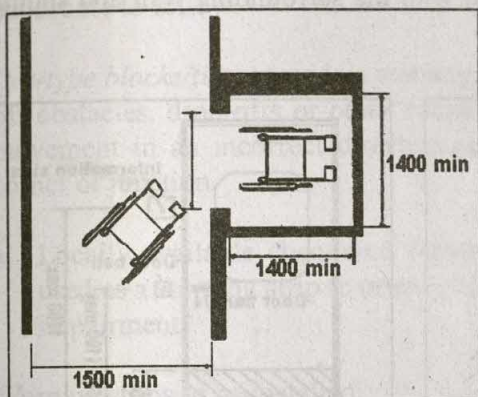
Usually one finds stairs with uneven steps and handrails on one side only in schools. Handrails should be on both the sides including the wall (if any) and continuous on the landing.

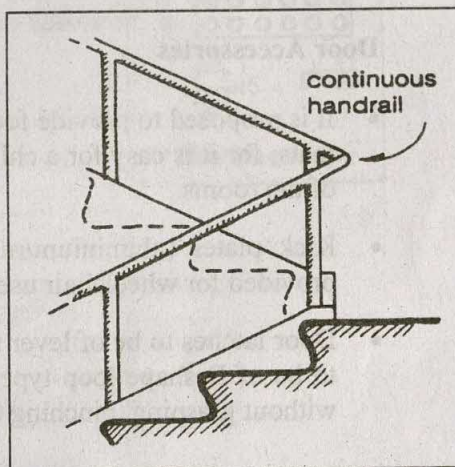
Points to remember:

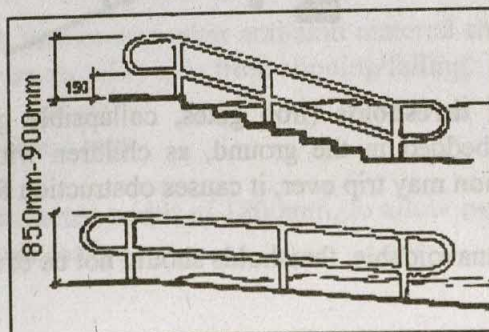
- Uniform risers: 150 mm and tread: 300 mm.
- Stair edges (nosings) should have bright contrasting colours: 50mm min.
- Landing should be 1200mm deep, clear of any door swing.
- The steps should have an unobstructed width of at least 1200mm.
- Warning strips to be placed at 300mm at the beginning and at the end of all stairs.
- Nosings to be avoided.
- Stairs should be adequately illuminated.

Lifts

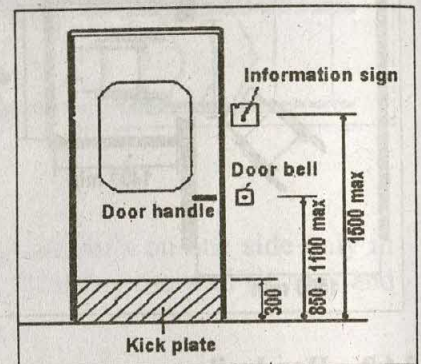
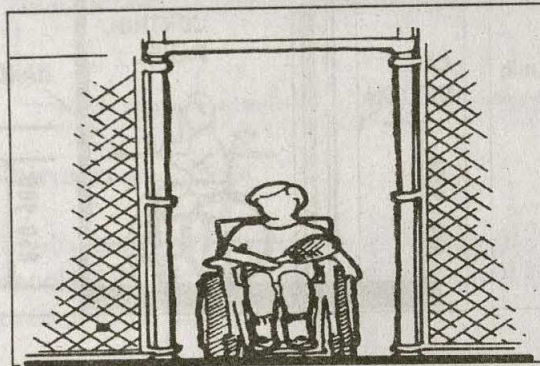
For multi storey/level school buildings lifts are required.

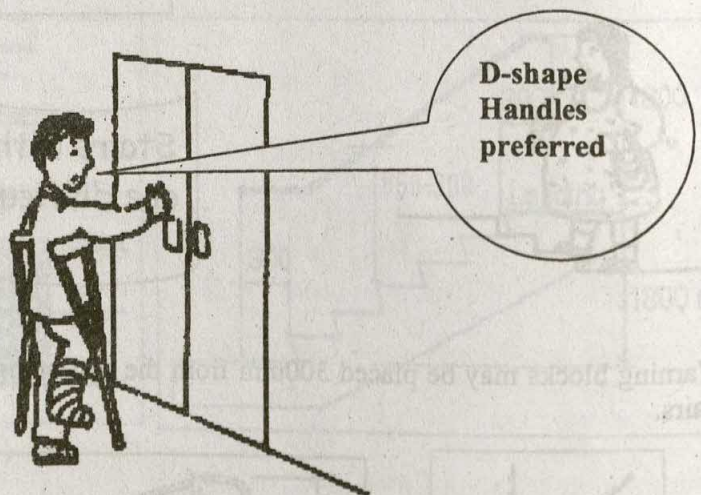
- *Floor space:* Minimum space for wheelchair users
- 1400mm × 1400mm.
- *Doors:* 900mm wide and closing mechanism to be adjusted to give adequate entry time.

- *Call button & control panel:* At a reach of 900mm-1000mm; at least 450mm from any corner.
- *Control panel:* Inside the lift and on both the sides.
- Information in Braille/raised numbers, audio and visual indicator, review mirror & kick plates to be fitted.

7.4.2 Handrails

- Should be at a height between700-750 mm for children and 850-900mm for adults, from the steps.
- To be continuous on both sides even at the landing.
- Should be circular in section with a diameter of 40-45mm; at least 45mm clear of the surface to which they are attached;
- To extend a minimum of 300mm at the beginning and at the end of stairs.
- To be grouted into the ground.

Stairs without handrails are difficult to negotiate.

- Warning blocks may be placed 300mm from the beginning and the end of stairs.

7.4.3 Doors and Thresholds

- The width of accessible entrance door should not be less than 900mm, which is wide enough to pass a wheelchair and a child using crutches.
- Door frames to be colour contrasted with the surrounding wall and should not be heavier than 22N to open.

Door Accessories

- It is proposed to provide foot mats – either recessed in the ground or rubber mats, for it is easy for a child with vision impairment to detect the entrance of the rooms.
- Kick plates (aluminium/rubber/acrylic sheet) of 300mm height may be provided for wheelchair users, outside the doors to avoid wear and tear.
- Door latches to be of lever type and door handles on both sides of all doors to be of D shape loop-type which can be opened with minimum of force, without grasping, pinching or twisting.

- All **thresholds** (iron gates, collapsible grill gates or any other) to be embedded in the ground, as children with low vision or with impaired vision may trip over, it causes obstruction for wheelchairs also.
- If unavoidable, thresholds should not be of more than 12mm in height.

7.4.4 Tactile Surface/ Floor Finishing

To orient children with vision impairment

Line-type blocks/tiles to be used to indicate the correct path/route to follow.

Guiding path

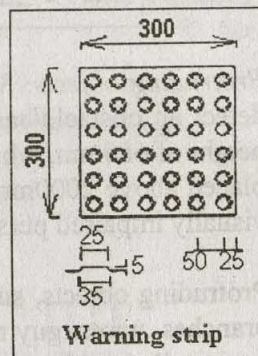
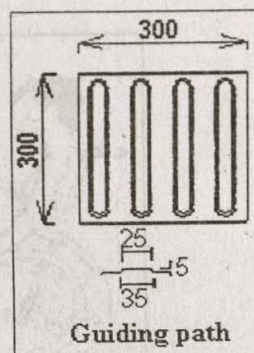
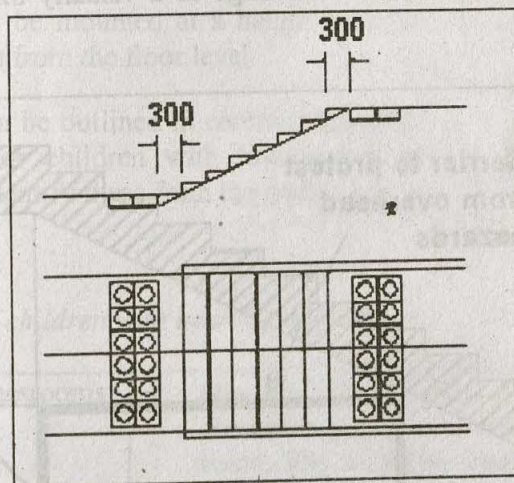
Dot-type blocks/tiles provide a warning signal, to screen off obstacles, drop-offs or other hazards, to discourage movement in an incorrect direction and to warn of a corner or junction.

- Locally available chequered cemented tiles can be used as a warning strip to orient children with vision impairment.

Warning strip

Warning strips to be installed:

- In front of an entrance/exit to and from a staircase, ramp or multi-level crossing facility (300mm before & after).
- In front of toilets and drinking water facility.

Lay out of Warning Strip on Staircase

Anti-skid Floor Finishing

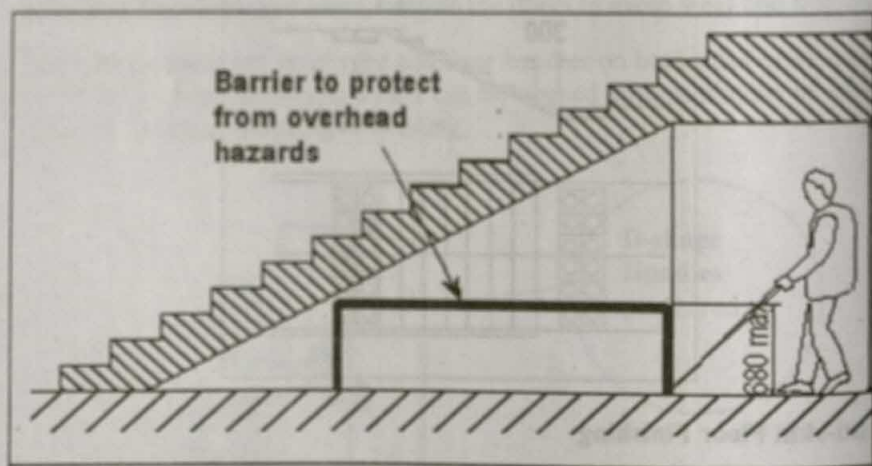
- Usually glazed tiles/marble/stone is used as flooring material in the toilets. This makes the flooring very slippery even if there is little water/mud on the floor.
- Cement flooring, matt finish tiles or any other anti-skid material should be used to avoid children who use mobility aids from slipping/falling.

7.4.5 Corridors and Circulation Areas

Corridors should have an unobstructed width of 1800mm, to allow two wheel chairs/crutch users to pass through easily.

Children using mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers etc.), find it difficult to negotiate even a small **level difference**. All level differences (more than 12mm) should be bevelled (slope between two heights).

Protruding objects: White cane used by children with vision impairment can detect an obstacle/barrier at floor level only. If anything is placed above the height of 680mm, white cane cannot detect that obstacle/barrier. These may be placed above 2000mm from the floor. For example, a barrier to warn blind or visually impaired persons should be provided under stairways.

Protruding objects, such as directional signs, almirahs, fire extinguishers, tree branches, wires, guy ropes, telephones, benches and decorative fixtures should be installed with consideration of the range of a visually impaired person's white cane.

7.4.6 Information Boards and Signages

Access Symbols to be displayed for all the accessible features should be provided.

Large print, sharp contrast between text / symbols and their background, should be painted in blue colour on white background.

All signage room numbers and nameplates to be in Braille and raised letters to be at the eye level on the wall.

Access Symbol

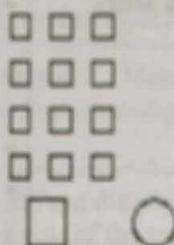
Directional/Tactile map

- A lay out map of the building (in bold and contrasting colours) including all classrooms, library etc. may be placed near the entrance in the Principal's room.
- Reception/enquiry counter to be marked with a directional arrow sign.

7.4.7 Lighting and Acoustics

Lighting: All classrooms, library, examination halls etc. to be well lit.

Switches: To be within the reach of wheel chair users i.e. should be mounted at a height between 450mm-1200mm from the floor level.

Switchboards can be outlined in contrasting colour (yellow/black) for children with low vision, to enable them to identify these from the wall.

Acoustics

Specific needs of children with hearing impairment

1.	Open air classrooms	• *Monitor voice levels:* As the noise in the classroom grows louder, so does the teacher's voice. For example electric equipment e.g. fan, tube light etc. should be noiseless. • The noise level to be reduced rather than raising your own voice. • If available use closed classrooms for teaching. Open area classrooms generate very high levels of background noise and children with hearing loss can be at significant disadvantage. • In an open air set up, the classrooms should be in a silence zone, free from vehicular/traffic noise, vegetation around classrooms helps in absorbing considerable noise.

2.	Inside the classroom	*Managing reverberation:* Reverberation occurs when sound bounces-off hard surfaces and creates echoes. Teachers can help manage reverberation by: • Use of mat on the floor, covering bare walls with soft surfaces such as curtains or student artwork on thermacol sheets. • Soft surfaces reflect sound much less than hard surfaces and reduce reverberation. • Placing large, hard surfaces such as mobile whiteboards or blackboards at angles in the room rather than parallel or at right angles to the walls.

Specific needs of children with visual impairment

Level differences	• Try to avoid too many levels.
Step & stairs	• Tactile surface/blocks at the top and bottom of stairs helps define the beginning and the ending of stairs. • Use of contrasting colours on stairs to help children with low vision. • All staircases must have railings. • All sudden drops in level where there are no stairs must be barricaded with railings.
Lighting	• Lighting must be bright and uniform right through the school, be it classrooms, offices, corridors, toilets, canteen, library, laboratories, or lobbies.
Signage	• Tactile markings (warning strip/foot mat) at the entrance of every room. • Room numbers and name plates in large size, in contrasting colours and raised letters for blind children can feel and low vision child can easily see.
Glare	• Windows and doors to be designed in a way that it totally shuts out glare and shadows.
Circulation Area	• All parts of the school must be laid out avoiding clutter, with enough free space for children to move about with ease and freedom. • Use of slopes and ramps (instead of steps) is recommended in auditoria, playing fields, and gardens. • Potentially dangerous areas like swimming pools must be cordoned off.
Library	• School libraries must be equipped with computers, scanners, and screen reading software.

Purpose: Children having residual vision may use their sense of touch and be able to move in the school independently, with confidence and dignity.

7.4.8 Toilets

Simple Guidelines for Toilets to be Used by All

Sl. No.	Concern	Accessible feature
1.	Access to the toilet	• A concrete or earth ramp that finishes level to the toilet floor, with a maximum gradient of 1:12. • Steps should have a handrail for support. • Rough cement flooring that does not become slippery when wet, especially for people using crutches.
2.	Door	A door with a clear opening of 900 mm that swings outwards, to maximize the space within (with a doorstop to prevent it opening more than 90 degrees and a rope or rail on the inside).
3.	Manoeuvrability	Clear floor space (minimum 1750mm × 2000mm) to allow wheelchairs/moving with helpers.
4.	Support while using the facility	Grab bars/handrails: horizontal and diagonal rails attached to the wall on either side of the toilet (if made of iron, these should be painted to avoid corrosion).
5.	European type WC	• To avoid squatting, either a fixed seat or moveable seat placed over the toilet hole made of concrete, wood, bamboo or plastic etc. • Wood and concrete should be painted for improved moisture resistance and hygiene.
6.	Private hygiene	Source of water inside the toilet cubicle.

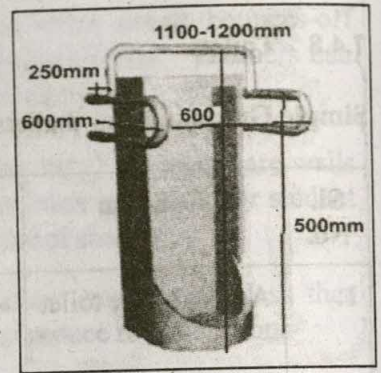
Girls Toilets

Toilets should have proper signage as per the guidelines mentioned in (1) and (4) above.

Boys Toilets

Toilets should have proper signage and as per the guidelines mentioned in (1) and (4) above.

Urinals

- At least one of the urinals should have grab bars; installed on each side and in the front of the urinal to support ambulant persons with disabilities (for example, crutch users).
- The front bar is to provide chest support; the sidebars are for the user to hold on to while standing.
- Urinals should be stall-type or wall-hung, with an elongated rim at a maximum of 400mm-430mm above the finish floor.
- A clear floor space 760mm by 1220mm should be provided in front of urinals to allow forward approach.

All toilets to have pictogram (male in triangle and female in circle), marked on plates along with Braille and raised letters, put on the wall next to the door, for the benefit of children with vision impairment.

A low cost solution: You may put a belt on boy's toilet door handle and a braid for girl's toilet!

Unisex Accessible Toilet

1. Due to space constraint, at times it's not possible to create a wheel chair friendly toilet separately in girls and boys toilets. In such circumstances a unisex accessible toilet to be created in a place, easily reachable by children using mobility aids like wheelchairs, crutches etc.
2. Almost all the schools do not provide any Western seat (WC) toilet facility. However it is important to have an accessible toilet cubicle with European style WC for CWSN and senior (aged) staff.
3. Use by teachers and other staff will ensure proper maintenance and cleanliness of WC toilets.
4. In a multi storey/level school building, a unisex accessible toilet should be provided:

   - on the ground floor (if there is no lift) and
   - on each floor (if there is a lift).

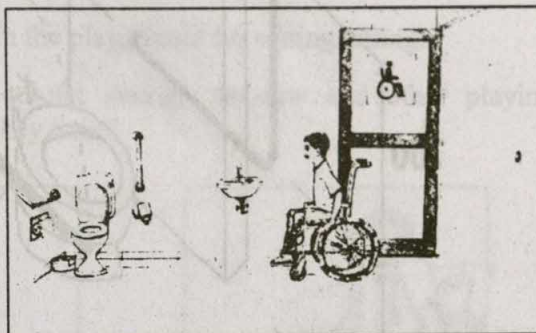
Internal layout

A minimum of one toilet compartment should have enough floor space for wheelchair users to enter and exit.

- Clear floor space 1750mm × 2000mm.
- Provide a door of clear opening of at least 900mm with the door swing outwards; or else the door can be of folding or sliding type.

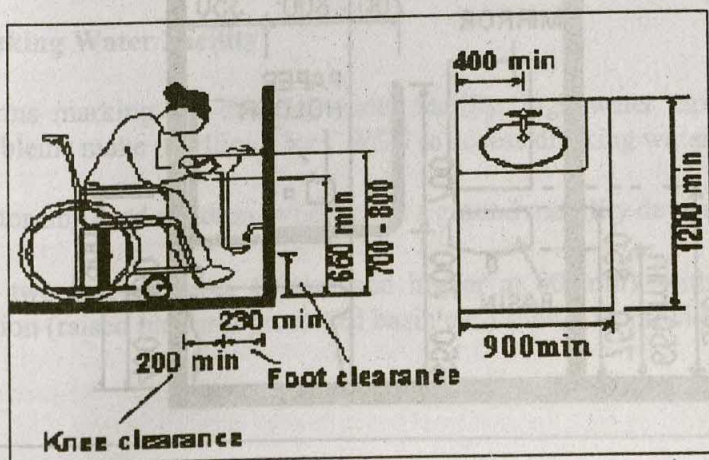
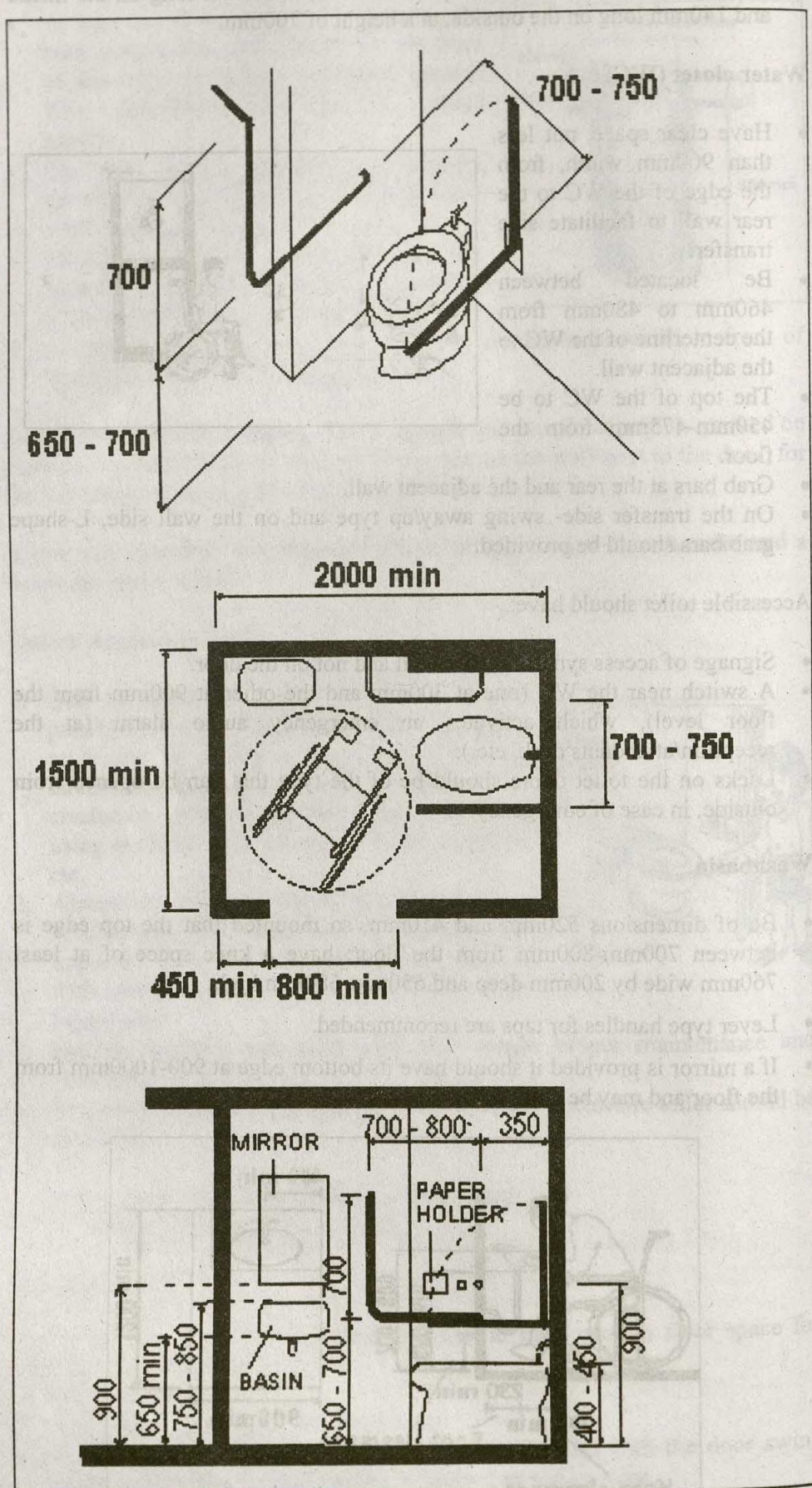
- Should have slip resistant flooring.
- Be provided with a horizontal pull bar at least 600mm long on the inside and 140mm long on the outside, at a height of 700mm.

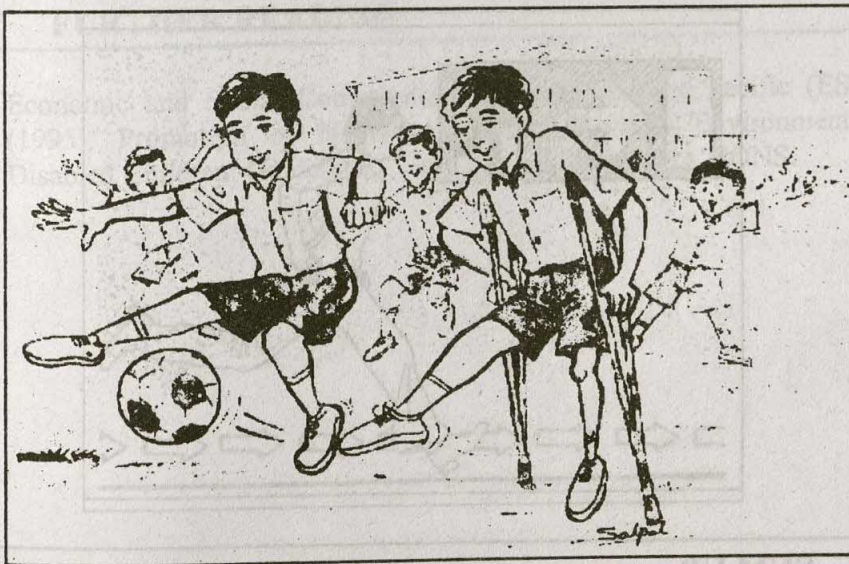
Water closet (WC)

- Have clear space, not less than 900mm width, from the edge of the WC to the rear wall to facilitate side transfer.
- Be located between 460mm to 480mm from the centerline of the WC to the adjacent wall.
- The top of the WC to be 450mm-475mm from the floor.
- Grab bars at the rear and the adjacent wall.
- On the transfer side- swing away/up type and on the wall side, L-shape grab bars should be provided.

Accessible toilet should have:

- Signage of access symbol on the wall and not on the door.
- A switch near the WC (one at 300mm and the other at 900mm from the floor level), which activates an emergency audio alarm (at the reception/attendants desk, etc.).
- Locks on the toilet doors should be of the type that can be opened from outside, in case of emergency.

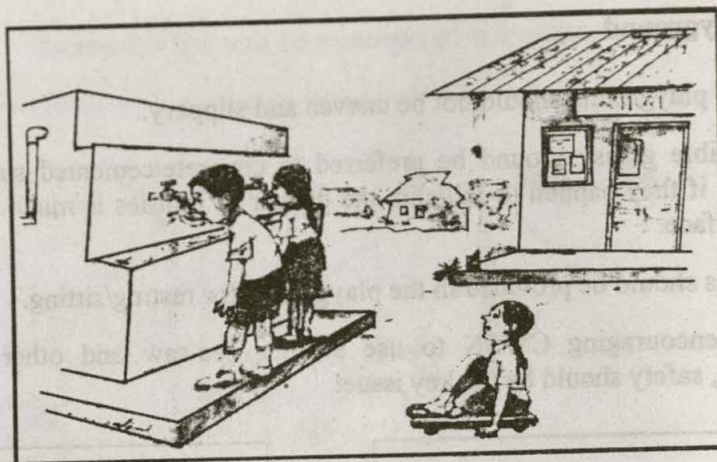
Washbasin

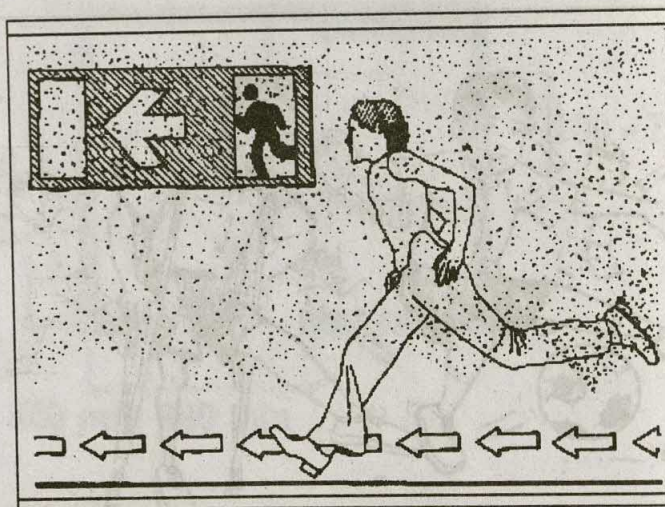
- Be of dimensions 520mm and 410mm, so mounted that the top edge is between 700mm-800mm from the floor; have a knee space of at least 760mm wide by 200mm deep and 650mm-680mm high.
- Lever type handles for taps are recommended.
- If a mirror is provided it should have its bottom edge at 900-1000mm from the floor and may be inclined at an angle.

Internal View and Dimensions of Accessible Toilet

7.4.9 Playground

- Way to playground should not be uneven and slippery.
- If possible grassy ground be preferred to concrete/cemented surface for CWSN if they happen to fall/slip, the danger of injuries is much less on a soft surface.
- Benches should be provided in the playground for resting/sitting.
- When encouraging CWSN to use swings, see-saw and other playing devices, safety should be the key issue!

7.4.10 Drinking Water Facility

High platforms marking the drinking water facility, high water taps, water drainage problems make it difficult for CWSN to access drinking water.

For loco-motor impaired children (wheel chair / ground mobility device users).

- Taps at two levels (lower 450mm and higher at 800mm), without any obstruction (raised platform/protruded basin etc.) should be provided.

7.4.11 Emergency Evacuation

- *Emergency exits* should be clearly marked with proper signages/ pictograms and should be clear of all obstructions.
- *Emergency alarm* both audio (hooter type) and visual (flashing bulb) to be provided on each floor/level at strategic locations.
- *Teachers/students/staff/security guards* need to be well trained for emergency evacuation exercise, at periodic intervals.

7.5 SUM UP

Opening doors to CWSN for inclusive education makes a society inclusive. For this, various measures require to be adopted to create an accessible barrier-free environment. For free movement, a loco-motor impaired child requires simple adaptation in classroom such as doors, space between two desks etc. Toilets need to be made accessible for wheelchair etc. For visual impaired child, many such signals and tactile maps are required so that Visually Impaired children could keep their movement barrier-free. In the same way, a hearing impaired child requires different types of signals in the form of lighting with proper symbols so that they may use the place without any fear. This unit provides a detailed description of how to make the school a barrier-free place to provide an inclusive environment to all students.

Do you know?

1. School children in a village in Ladakh high up in the trans-Himalayan regions cleared a path and made it accessible for their classmate who uses a wheelchair.

2. Railway stations in our metro cities are made accessible with ramps for wheel chair users.

7.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Discuss the following with your colleagues:

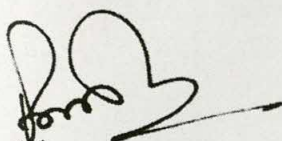
1. What problems did you encounter in moving around through the school?
2. How would you feel if you couldn't climb up the stairs alone by yourself?
3. What physical barriers make it hard for a person to move around on the street, through the school?
4. What modifications can make it easier for children with physical disabilities (including wheelchair users) to move about by themselves in school, in streets, or homes?

7.7 FURTHER READING

1. Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (1995). Promotion of Non-Handicapping Physical Environments for Disabled Children: Guidelines. New York, UNITED NATIONS.

केंद्रीय शैक्षिक प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, नई दिल्ली

Central Institute of Educational Technology

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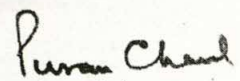
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11th All India Children's Educational Audio-Video Festival

प्रमाण-पत्र /CERTIFICATE

प्रम[illegible]ित किया जाता है कि डॉ/श्री/सुश्री ______________________

ने ____________ के रूप में ____________ कार्यक्रम ______________________

____________ आयुवर्ग के लिए 27 से 29 जनवरी 2006 तक राज्य शैक्षिक प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान भुव[illegible]श्वर, उड़िसा में आयोजित 11वें बाल शैक्षिक श्रव्य एंव दृश्य उत्सव में ____________ पुरस्[illegible]र प्राप्त किया।

This is to certify that Dr/Mr./Ms. S.V.S. Chaudhry *who has contributed as* PRODUCER *for the programme* SUMAN KI KAHANI *is hereby given the award* Best prog. *in the category* Teachers *at the 11th All India Children's Educational Audio-Video Festival organised from 27-29 January 2006 at SIET, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.*

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Festival Director

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Joint Director
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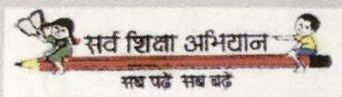
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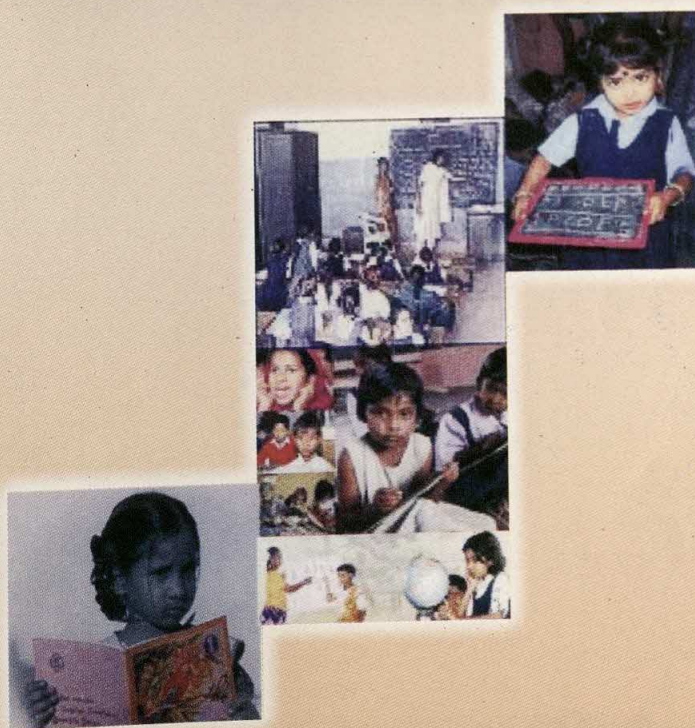
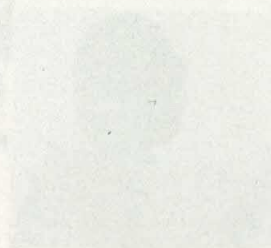
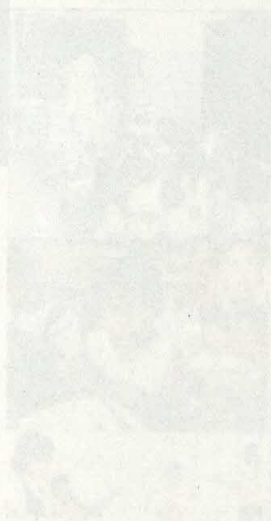

Distance Education Programme-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

(An IGNOU-MHRD, Govt. of India Project)

Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110 068

"शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।"

– इन्दिरा गांधी

"Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

– Indira Gandhi

IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION ON GIRLS EDUCATION

Distance Education Programme-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
(DEP-SSA)
(An IGNOU-MHRD, Govt. of India Project)
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110 068

IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION ON GIRLS EDUCATION

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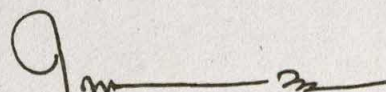
Foreword

Providing free and compulsory education to all children of 6-14 year age group is a constitutional mandate and a fundamental right of every child of our country (86[th] Indian Constitutional Amendment Act). Efforts of UEE and EFA can be fruitful only if our system of education will be able to bring a change in societal norms and attitudes of people. Our system of elementary education must be made responsive to the needs of society in general and education of girls in particular through training and development of teachers, teacher educators and other functionaries. Motivation and mobilization of parents and the community around and linkage between school teachers and the community are essential to create enabling conditions for facilitating education of girls at elementary level and reducing gender disparity. Govt. of India has launched certain interventions like National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) to respond to the needs of girls from socially disadvantaged marginalized group in our country. The motto behind these two innovations is to reduce gender gap and improve female literacy in our country.

Initiatives for the promotion of girls need to be undertaken from grassroots level for realizing benefits of various schemes, policies and programmes. Paschim Bengal Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission in collaboration with DEP-SSA, IGNOU has taken up an attempt in this regard to train in-service teachers working at elementary level in the district of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal. This is an innovative attempt, first of its kind in the state of West Bengal, for providing need-based training and developing awareness of elementary school teachers. The module entitled "**Training Module on Girls Education**" has been developed for improving quality of in-service teacher education programme. I am confident that this module will be able to enlighten the trainers, master trainers and teachers working at elementary level for effective implementation of various interventions for the promotion of girls education.

I express my whole hearted thanks to Sh. D. Nariala, State Project Director, SSA, West Bengal and his team for their dynamic efforts in the direction of bringing about a revolution in in-service teacher education programme in the state of West Bengal.

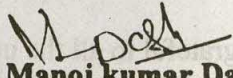
I am grateful to all the unit writers for their commitment and dedication and the academic contributions in the development of this module.

I am also especially thankful to my colleagues of DEP-SSA for their coordination in the development of this training module and my thanks are also due to all the support staff working in this project towards the completion of this assignment.

Attempts have been made to develop this training module with due attention to the needs of trainers and master trainers of in-service teacher education programme at elementary stage. I am sure this module will be quite beneficial to functionaries working at elementary level to promote education of girls.

I look forward to receiving constructive suggestions for the improvement of this training module.

March, 2008

Prof. M.L. Koul
Project Director

About the Document

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aims at providing quality elementary education to all children of age group 6-14 years at one hand and bridging social and gender gaps with active participation of community for the education of children on the other hand. Promotion of girl education at elementary level is one of the prime focuses of the national goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and Education for all (EFA). Various efforts have already been made under government of India to promote education of girl and reducing gender disparity at elementary level but innovations in the effective implementation of interventions is till a challenge. At the same time improving professional competency of teachers and other functionaries is an essential requirement for providing quality elementary education to all. Keeping this holistic aspect DEP-SSA , IGNOU collaboration with Paschim Bang Sarva Shiksha Mission developed a teachers training module entitled **"Training module on Girls Education"** for providing quality in-service training to teachers working at elementary level. This module aims at improving competencies of teachers, trainers and Maser trainers and other functionaries under SSA. Developing skills and professional competencies of teacher will definitely lead to bring a radical change in motivation and mobilization of community members for effective management of Schools.

The over view of the content of the module is presented under seven different chapters namely; i)education of girls- conceptual frame work;ii) policy initiative for girls education at elementary level; iii) girls education; constraints and barriers; iv) gender sensitization; v) strategies to promot girls education at elementary level; vi) Empowerment of women for facilitating girls education; and vii) Some implications of girls education.

This is an informative document which will be of very helpful to trainers, master trainers, administrators and implementers in designing and developing effective in service teacher education programme pertaining to inclusive education under sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

March, 2008

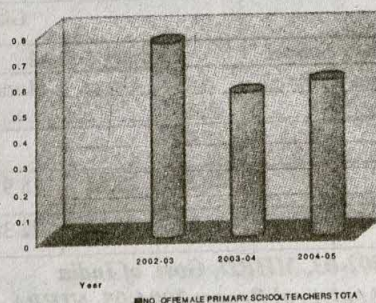
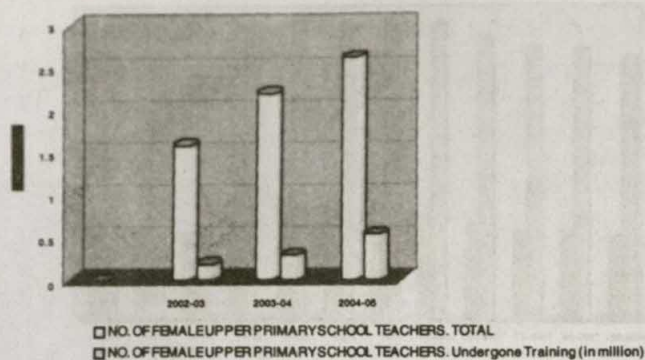
Dr. Manoj kumar Dash
Programme Officer

CONTENTS

1.2.7 In-service Training of Female Teacher

Table 7: Percent of Female Teachers provided In-service Training.

Year	No. of Female Primary School Teachers			No. of Female Upper Primary School Teachers		
	Total (in million)	Undergone Training (in million)	%	Total (in million)	Undergone Training (in million)	%
2002-03	0.75	0.37	49.90	1.59	0.19	12.20
2003-04	0.55	0.23	41.98	2.20	0.29	13.32
2004-05	0.60	0.26	43.48	2.62	0.54	20.80

Source: Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05 (NIEPA)

There are various categories of elementary school teachers who need to be trained and empowered in one or more areas; namely (i) untrained teachers; (ii) new entrant teachers; (ii) working teachers (trained); and (iv) para teachers. The total number of female teachers in primary schools increased from 0.53 million 1994-95 to 0.71 million in 2005, approximately 1.4 times. The number of female teachers in upper primary schools has increased from 0.41 million in 1994-95 to 0.72 million in 2005-06, nearly 1.8 times (NIEPA, 2004-05 and MHRD, 2002-03). 43.48 percent of primary school female teachers have undergone in-service training during 2004-05 in comparison to 41.98 percent in 2003-04. As noticed from Table 7, 20.80 percent of upper primary school female teachers underwent in-service training during 2004-05 whereas it was 13.32 during 2003-04 (NIEPA 2003-04). Data reveals that though more percent of female teachers from the primary school underwent in-service teacher education, the rate of enrolment and retention of girls at primary level has not been improved considerably. Girls' education has been perceived as one of the key issues in bringing quality education and hence is considered as one of the important aspects of national development and reconstruction. Progress of a nation thus depends on the quality in education of the women who need to be empowered through effective and innovative strategies.

1.2.8 Girls' Toilet (Basic Facility)

Table: 8: Percent of Schools Having Toilet

Year	Common Toilet						Girls Toilet					
	Primary School			Upper Primary School			Primary School			Upper Primary School		
	All areas	Urban	Rural	All areas	Urban	Rural	All areas	Urban	Rural	All areas	Urban	Rural
2003	29.06			39.18			15.64			28.14		
2004	36.16			44.25			20.61	18.63	18.91	32.91	53.31	30.87
2005	41.43	56.83	39.97	48.52	64.02	47.02	24.27	43.74	22.38	36.91	54.79	35.19

Source: i) Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India
ii) Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA

From the above Table 8, it is revealed that Percentage of schools having common as well as separate toilets for girls has been increased from 2003 to 2005. In 2005, 41.43 percent schools were equipped with common toilet facility at primary level and 48.52 percent at upper primary level. With regard to availability of separate toilet for girls, the numbers of schools were 24.27 at primary level and 36.91 percent at upper primary level. There are more schools with common as well as Girls' toilets in Urban areas than the rural ones. In case of privately managed schools, 69.23 percent schools were equipped with such facilities where as it was only 42.82 percent in Govt. managed schools. Similar is the situation with regard to schools with girls' toilet.

In case of Chhattisgarh only 9.15 percent schools have common toilet and 3.43 percent have girls' toilet where as in Kerala 78.37 percent primary schools have common toilets whereas 57.17 percent schools have separate toilet for girls. Not a single state has been observed providing both common and separate toilets for girls to all of its schools. From this we can easily infer the present status of Girls' education and our preparation for quality education at elementary level in the 21st century. This gives us the answer where do we stand?

1.3 ACTIVITY

Prepare a list related to information aspects on the following of your district and block separately

i) Literacy rate
ii) Enrolment of girls (General, SC, ST and other categories) separately.
iii) Drop out of girls
iv) Status of teachers particularly female teachers

1.4 LET US SUM UP

All activities relating to elementary education in general and education of girls in particular need to be judged with regard to achieving the target of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Constitution of India though calls for free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years, illiteracy is the major problem of India, particularly in rural India even today. Although there are many barriers to overcome this problem, gender disparity and gender inequality need to be addressed with special efforts on an urgent basis.

Significantly, there are dozens of causes which keep the children away from schools and the quantum of these causes emerges more from girls' side than that of boys. Problems of illiteracy among girl children vary from place to place and region to region and across the groups as well. Current status of girls' education in India particularly in rural India draws the attention of all stakeholders to serve for rural development and reconstruction there in one way or the other. Such an effort influences the social and economic development of the country and thus paves a way for the achievement of the goals of education under SSA.

In the successive units, we have discussed about various special measures undertaken under Government of India (GOI) to eliminate the gender discrimination and create gender sensitive educational system to increase the enrolment and retention of girl on one hand and improving the quality of elementary education on the other.

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POLICY INITIATIVES FOR GIRLS EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Structure

2.0 INTRODUCTION

At the time of Independence, we inherited an educational system which was not only small but suffered with inequalities of castes, gender and regimes. The educational status of women/girls was very low as compared to that of men/boys. We have made concerted efforts to improve the access, enrolment, retention and participation of girls in school education, higher education and technical, vocational education. Special efforts and provisions are being made to improve educational status of girls belonging to scheduled

castes, scheduled tribes, and other disadvantaged sections of our society. The present chapter/unit highlights some of the efforts made by our governments to improve educational status of girls/women.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Get familiarise with the recommendations of the various committees and commissions set up in the post Independence period to review the status of girls' education and suggest ways and means to improve the same
- Acquire an overview of Five Year Plans - an approach to girls' education
- Develop a broad understanding of policy commitments towards girls' education
- Understand Govt. initiatives including the SSA initiative to promote participation and retention of girls in general and education of girls belonging to socially deprived sections of the society at elementary level..

As discussed in Unit/Chapter I, the educational status of girls is much lower than that by boys despite the concerted efforts made by our government and non-government organisations. Let us glance through some of the efforts made by our government to improve girls' education during post independence period.

2.2 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

The constitution of India not only grants equality to all citizens including girls/women and forbids any discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth but also empowers the state to practice Protective Discrimination in favour of girls/women, children and any socially and educationally backward classes or the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Under the protective discrimination clause, the State (our country) has passed several legislations and initiated special programmes and schemes for the protection, welfare and development of girls/women and children. As per the Directive Principles of state policy, the Article 45 of our Constitution enjoins that the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of 10 years from the commencement of the Constitution, compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

This constitutional directive was interpreted by our policy planners as eight years of elementary education (five years of primary and three years of upper primary education) for all children in the age group 6-14 years as a programme of Universal Elementary Education (UEE).

2.3 IMPORTANT COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

2.3.1 The Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) upheld opening of every type of education to women open to men.

2.3.2. Report of the Durgabai Deshmukh Committee or National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) recommended:

- Appointments of school mothers in all the schools where there is no woman teachers;
- Separate lavatory arrangement in every co- educational school;
- Help in cash or kind such as covering the cost of books and stationery; school uniform or clothing and other educational equipments to all girls upto middle level, whose parents are below certain level of income;
- Creches for siblings;
- Schemes for awarding prizes to the villages which show the largest proportional enrolment and average attendance of girls;
- Two three prizes in the form of useful articles for regular attendance;
- Attendance scholarships in the form of useful articles to poor girls;
- Creation of a strong public opinion for girls' education;
- Provisions of suitable conditions in schools rather than passing of compulsory legislation so that parents can't be encouraged to send their daughters to schools;
- Women heads in coeducation schools;
- Free and subsidised transport in order to bring middle and secondary schools, within easy reach; and
- Suitable hostel facilities. The day boarding and lodging arrangements in these hostels should be cheap, and payment in kind should be permitted

2.3.3 Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1962-63) suggested incentives to prevent dropouts among girls.

2.3.4 The Committee to Look into the Causes for Lack of Public Support Particularly in Rural Areas, for Girls' Education and to Enlist Public Cooperation, 1963 and Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls, 1964 focussed on appointment of women teachers; appointment of women teachers on staff should be obligatory where girls do attend a middle school ordinarily meant for boys, and grant of free books, writing materials and clothing to girls.

2.3.5 The Education Commission (1964-66) fully endorsed the recommendations of National Committee on the Education of Women; The Commission emphasized on the following points:

- Educating public opinion to overcome traditional prejudices against girls' education;
- Appointing women teachers;
- Popularising mixed primary schools; and opening separate schools for girls at the higher primary stage, wherever possible and.demanded;
- Providing free books and writing materials and if needed clothing also..

2.3.6 Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society NPE, 1986 – A Review Committee for Review of National Policy on Education, 1986 in 1990 upheld the need for adequate support services (water, fuel, fodder and child care) to the promotion of girls' education and more provisions of schooling facilities like atleast one primary school in each habitation with a population of 300 or more and atleast one middle school in each habitation with a population of 500 or more.

2.3.7 The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) recommended for women's education on the top priority basis so that women can't attain a comparable level of education by 2000. The plan suggested that:

- Educational programmes need to be restructured and school curricula to be modified to eliminate gender bias.

- Awareness needs to be generated among the masses regarding the necessity of educating girls. The media and various forms of communication have to be geared and a fruitful rapport has to be established between the community at large and the educational personnel.
- Fifty percent posts in elementary schools should be reserved for women teachers. In every school, at least one woman teacher should be there.
- School timings should be flexible and schools must be available within a walking distance Hence, a substantial increase is required in the number of schools for girls. The recommended distance of 3 km. for a middle school is a handicap for many girls, It is therefore, necessary to provide hostel facilities over there .

2.4 FIVE – YEAR PLANS AND GIRLS' EDUCATION

Girls'/women's education has assumed special significance in the context of our country's planned development. The First Five Year Plan advocated the need for adopting special measures to improve girls' education and provide equal opportunities to women/girls as men/boys here in respect of education and job.

The second Five Year Plan proposed special efforts at educating parents and make education more closely related to the needs of girls.

The report of the National Committee on women's Education (1959) made a strong impact on the Third Five Year Plan. The schemes launched included condensed school courses for adult women, Bal Savika Training and child care programmes. Subsequent plans supported these measures and also provided incentives such as free text books and scholarships for girls.

Although there was a large scale expansion of activities for education upto the Fourth Plan, vast disparities existed in the relative utilization of available facilities by boys and girls at various stages of education. Efforts were being made to implement recommendations of the Education, Commission (1964-66) and the National Policy on Education (1968) regarding promotion of girls education. The major thrust in the Fifth Plan was to offer equal opportunities to both boys and girls and for improving the quality of education imparted. Incentives like free text books, mid day meal, uniforms and attendance scholarships were to be given to promote enrolment and retention of girls in

backward areas and among underprivileged sections of society. Efforts were being made to improve the number of female teachers. The Sixth Plan gave special focus to initiate larger measure for equalization of educational opportunities. Major emphasis was on universalisation of elementary education, attachment of Balwadi-cum crèches, appointment of women teachers in rural areas, improving girls' participation in science and mathematics courses and increasing the number of hostels for girls of backward communities.

The effort during the Seventh Plan period was an outcome of National Policy on Education (1986). It gave overriding priority to the removal of women's illiteracy, obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in elementary and higher education.

The Eighth Five Year Plan promises to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not by pass women. During this plan period, the focus was on ensure that women were equal partners and participants in the developmental process. This approach of the Eighth Plan marked a definite shift from 'development' to 'empowerment' of women.

The Ninth Five Year Plan was the most crucial investment in women's development by improving the quality of life through investments in core sectors like health, hygiene, demographic profile and economic productivity. Education of girls and women's empowerment received significant attention as an index of human development.

Since girls find it difficult to cover a long distance to attend schools, it is necessary to have schools in the vicinity of the villages. The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) is committed to universalizing elementary education (UEE), has, therefore, fixed following goals:

- Universal Access
- Universal enrolment
- Universal retention
- Universal Achievement
- Equity

Targets fixed in the Tenth Plan:

- Bridge all gender gaps in enrolment, retention and learning achievement in the primary stage by 2007 and reduce the gap to 5% in the upper primary stage by 2007.

- Use special interventions and strategies to include girls.

Suggested Programmes for achieving UEE for girls:

The Tenth Plan focused on some women-centric programmes such as the existing Mahila Samakhya, and two new schemes, the Kasturba Gandhi Swantantra Vidyalaya (KGSV) and the National Programme for the Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The KGSV and the NPEGEL are proposed to be taken up during the Tenth Plan with the following features:

- Focus on educationally backward areas in girls' education.
- Focus on girls from the disadvantaged sections like those belonging to SC/ST, minorities, etc.
- Tackling gender-specific issues that prevent girls and women from having access to education.
- Providing women and adolescent girls with the necessary support structure, and an informal learning environment to create opportunities for education;
- Helping girls to overcome socio-cultural and economic factors inhibiting their access to elementary education.

2.5 THE POLICY PERSPECTIVE

The National Policy on Education, 1968 emphasized on "Equalization of Education Opportunity." It has been highlighted that strenuous efforts should be made to equalize educational opportunity. The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

The National Policy on Education (1986 and revised in 1992) brought out a marked shift in the policy perspective towards girls' education. While the National Policy on Education, 1968 emphasized on equalization of educational opportunities, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (revised in 1992) emphasized on education for women's equality and stressed on ending all kinds of social evils and practices derogatory to women. The NPE (1986) clearly states " The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women" The NPE and its Programme of Action (POA), 1992 laid major emphasis on increasing women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels along with school education. It further states that the policy of non-discrimination is recommended to

eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 also focuses on equal access to women quality education at all levels and reducing the gender gaps in secondary and higher education. The Empowerment of Women has found a special mention in the National Policy, 2001.

2.6 MAJOR PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS AT ELEMENTARY LEVELS

The commitment to UEE has been reiterated in each five year plans. The Education Commission (1964-66), the NPE (1968) and the NPE (1986) and its POA (1992) have all emphasised the need to implement the programme of UEE at the earliest

There have been a number of educational initiatives from the central and the state governments alongwith NGOs to achieve the goals of UEE especially after the recommendations of NPE 1986. Some of these initiatives are Bihar Education Project (BEP), UP Basic Education Project, Lok Jumbish, Shiksha karmi Project in Rajasthan and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). All these programmes and projects have special gender focus. For example, one of the criteria for selecting districts to initiate DPEP was low female literacy.

The government of India has launched a new scheme known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to incorporate all the existing schemes and programmes related to elementary education. The SSA aims to provide the quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010 with special focus on girls and children belonging to socio-economically disadvantaged groups and of children with special needs.

Special provisions under SSA for elementary education of girls

- Free textbooks
- Separate toilets for girls
- Recruitment of 50% women teachers
- Early Childhood Care and Education centres in/near schools
- Teachers' sensitisation programmes to promote equitable learning opportunities
- Back to school camps for out-of school girls
- Bridge courses for older girls
- Gender-sensitive teaching learning materials
- Intensive community mobilisation efforts
- Special fund for innovative need-based interventions for girls' attendance and

Some of the initiatives for girls under SSA are as follows:

National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL). The NPEGEL, was launched in September 2003 as an integral but separate gender component of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This programme provides additional components for enhancing the education of under privileged/disadvantaged girls at the elementary level through more intense community mobilisation and development of Model Cluster schools. Gender sensitisation, learning materials, and provision of need-based incentives like escorts, stationery, work books and uniforms are some of the endeavours under this programme.

Opening of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

The Government of India has launched a new scheme called Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) for setting up upto 750 residential schools with boarding facilities at elementary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minorities in difficult areas. Out of a total 750 KGBVs, the Government of India has proposed to set up 117 KGBVs in blocks having predominance of Muslim population in which at least three-fourths of the seats will be for girls from marginalised or minority communities while the rest may be made available to girls from families below the poverty line.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

Since the educational status of women/girls was very low at the time of independence, various measures have been taken to improve their condition as per the Constitutional provision for equality to all citizens including girls. Various committees were set up to suggest ways to promote education of girls. The Secondary Education Commission, The Education Commission, the NPE 1968 and 1986 made special recommendations for improving girls education at various levels. All five year plans made provisions for various initiatives and schemes to accelerate girls' education and women empowerment. Major programmes of UEE have special gender focus especially the DPEP and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan special schemes/programmes are launched under SSA to equalise educational opportunities among girls especially the girls from disadvantaged groups.

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GIRLS EDUCATION: CONSTRAINTS AND BARRIERS

Structure

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community owned quality education in a mission mode. The objective of this massive programme is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group by 2010.

One of the principle concerns in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to provide basic education to the girls especially those belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. Efforts will be made to mainstream gender concerns in all the activities under SSA programme. The programme recognizes the need for special efforts to bring all out-

of-school girls including girls belonging to the SC/ST minority communities to school. This would require a proper identification of out-of-school girls and children from disadvantaged sections of society.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand about education of girls
- understand socio-cultural barriers
- understand economic barriers
- understand educational barriers

3.2 BARRIERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION

The education of girls is lagging behind than boys at all levels of school education. Their enrolment rate is low and drop out rate is higher than boys at all levels of education. Many girls leave schools even without completing elementary education. There are many socio-cultural, economic and educational barriers, which hinder their participation in education. Some of these barriers are discussed below:

3.2.1 Poverty: The rate of illiteracy is closely linked to poverty. Due to the poverty or low family income, if parents are not in a position to send both boys and girls to school, they usually send boys to schools and retain girls at home to do house-hold work. If education is free-up to primary stage, there is possibility to increase the participation of girls and it will not put any kind of financial burden on the parents all the same.

3.2.2 Number of children: In poor families generally, there are many children. According to the priority list of parents, girls' education is not compulsory and boys get a high chance of receiving education.

3.2.3 Child Marriage: Many girls in many states of India still get married at an early age, which affect their education to a great extent. (e.g. girls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, etc.)

3.2.4 Customs and cultural practices: Many customs and cultural practices higher education of girls. For examples many parents of a certain community do not send their daughters to schools when they attain puberty. Purdan system is also affecting education of girls.

3.2.5 Female teachers in schools: Girls are more interested in going to schools if female teachers are there in the schools. They are more comfortable and more vocal with female, thus actively focusing and participating in the learning processes. In rural areas also, parents are interested in sending their girl children to school if female teachers are present. If qualified female teachers are teaching in the school they feel more secured towards their girl children. They may be hesitating to send their girl children in male environment based school. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) recommended the need for having a female teacher in every primary school. It is to promote girls towards education by raising the sense of security and providing them a role model. If female teacher is not present in school, girls may not go to school, especially at upper primary level.

3.2.6 Transport facility: One of the barriers for girl education may be the location of schools which are far away from their homes, particularly in rural areas. Adequate transport system is needed for girl to attend the schools. It will be more convenient for them if school buses take responsibility for pick and drop facility for the girl children. In rural areas, other modes may be tried out.

3.2.7 Molestation/abuse in school: Most of the parents feel insecured towards their girl children as instances of abduction, rape, sexual harassment and molestation of girl damperns the enthusiasm of parents and girl students in pursuing their education beyond a certain age.

3.2.8 Inappropriate school timing: In rural areas morning time is not suitable for girl education, as they are engaged in domestic work at home or in farms and field during these hours. The enrolment and retention rate may be high when educational facilities are made available during periods suitable to them when they are free from domestic chores.

3.2.9 Toilet facility: This may be one of the reasons of lower participation rates of girls in education especially at upper primary level. The separate toilet facilities for girls must be created in the school premises. This must also cover the security aspect for girl. At the same time, toilet facility is needed for female teachers also.

3.2.10. Lack of girls' schools: Many parents do not want to send their daughters to co-educational schools especially at upper primary level. There is an urgent need to open separate schools for girls especially at upper primary level as a powerful strategy for bringing to a conclusive girls' school environment. There must be strong provision of good quality schools for girls if demand is there.

3.2.11 Lack of hostel facilities: One of the obstacles in girls' education is that schools are away from their homes, they cannot avail themselves of this facility due to lack of hostel arrangement. The girls belonging to SC/ST category would continue their education particularly in rural areas, if they are provided with free or inexpensive residential facilities nearer to the school.

3.2.12 Gender Discrimination: A number of practices within educational system reinforce gender-differentiated practices and promote inequality, gender bias and gender stereotyping.

You might have observed some others barriers, which are specific to your (Community, village and district etc.

3.3 LET US SUM UP

Most of the time gender differences are observed in home, in society, schools, at work places and in political decision-making within the democratic process itself. More specifically it is reflected in the distribution of care work, household responsibilities and the decision-making powers at home and also this discrimination is seen in the parents' behaviors and choices as well as in total school environment.

In specific situations, both the socio-cultural and the physical environments continue to create barriers to girls education, social malpractices, such as child marriage, while hardly affect the education of boys, they have a prominent adverse effect on the girls' education.

These factors adversely contribute to creating unattractive environments in which girls must run the gauntlet of difficulties to remain in school, as a result of which their learning is severely compromised. A discriminatory attitude builds up among teachers and other members of society resulting in girls dropping out in large numbers.

Activity

1. Identify barriers to girls' education which are a common place in your community/village/district.
2. Suggest some strategies to overcome these barriers and bring girls to the fold of education.

3.4 REFERENCES

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Structure

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Due to cultural and social practices, the mindset of the community operates in a particular way. Men and women in the community develop rigid view about the way they are treated in the society. Thus the mindset needs to be made more flexible to accept change. This will need attitudinal change. The module will bring out various gender issues causing concern to the 50% human resource and sensitize the community towards discrimination of female gender which has tremendously suffered over the years due to lack of confidence, empowerment and because of socialization. The following pages will deal with various issues and concepts as brought out in the overview and in the introduction as sub-concepts with examples, case studies and relevant activities.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this training module, participants are expected to distinguish between

a) Gender and sex as a concept

b) Know well various agents of socialization such as family, society, school, work place and state

c) Issues of gender dignity and social justice

4.2 OVERVIEW OF GENDER SENSITIZATION

Extensive research over the years has established that a peculiar kind of discrimination has existed in the society for centuries that has led to differential behaviours towards both genders i.e. men and women; boys and girls. As a result, various misconceptions got associated with gender. These misconceptions are related to prevailing differences between men and women in the society which are not biologically determined rather socially constructed. Due to these differences, both the genders i.e. men and women are expected to behave in different ways. Thus the present module explores the concept of understanding gender both in the biological and social context i.e. difference between sex and gender. Further it would explore different roles assigned to each gender and their expected responsibilities. It would also analyse as to how different social and cultural institutions treat each gender in a way that discriminations have been visible at different levels. The module also explores and brings the point that gender is an issue of human dignity and human rights. How can the present and future generations redefine different gender roles and create new gender relations and new gender order in the family, community and society. Finally the teacher has to use strategies to sensitize all stakeholders of education to bring and establish gender peace and harmony in school and the classroom. You, as a part and parcel of this community, have the role and responsibility to make the community aware of gender issues and sensitize them for a better understanding.

4.3 METHODOLOGY

Participatory, through sharing of experiences, group discussion, interactive, case studies, examples etc.

4.3.1 Aims and Objectives of this Training Module

Participants will be able to:

- identify and analyze issues concerning differential behaviours towards men and women, girls and boys

- evolve strategies to overcome gender discrimination, and restore gender dignity, harmony and peace.
- be gender sensitive

4.3.2 Understanding Gender, the Concept

As a concept gender can be understood in a much better fashion through the roles and responsibilities, and cultural and social norms in the various institutions of home, family, community, society and work places of different categories. The concept of gender can also be understood well in many other social and cultural institutions like religious places, various functions such as marriage, birth, death, family celebrations and in social, economic and political connotations of power relations.

As we know roles ascribed to men and women in the society are specific to each culture, they are similar in many ways but also vary tremendously in various pockets of India and even in the world. Almost in each culture, there is a gap amongst men and women in power and liberation. In a patriarchal society men are more powerful because they have decision making powers and own resources much more than the women own. Men have the freedom to have control of their lives while women are more or less dictated and have to do whatever they are told to do. The freedom and taking control of their own lives is lacking amongst women, rather they have been socialized like this only. They own few resources only if at all they own something. This has been happening more due to illiteracy and ignorance.

However the power structure has started to change with the younger generations being more aware and because of better education, power of knowledge and economic independence of women, and amendments in certain relevant laws which are none women friendly, and also due to new gender friendly policies and programmes initiated by state governments and at the center. Therefore gender roles and responsibilities have begun to change which calls for new definition of gender roles and relations due to new equations of power, economic, liberation and personal freedom.

4.3.3 Sex and Gender

It is a well known fact that sex is biologically determined and gender is socially constructed. Biologically we say men and women, girls and boys, which is innate and natural. It is definite and determined biologically by XX and XY sex chromosomes. The natural and random union of XX and XY chromosomes of mother and father respectively leads to the birth of a child i.e. son (XY) and a daughter (XX). This is the chance combination of two chromosomes coming from both types of paired sex chromosomes. The XY chromosome of father only is responsible in determining the birth of a female (XX) or a male child (XY).

The social construction of gender only has given rise to discrimination. As mentioned in the sub-concept I, due to different gender roles, power structure and relations due to different social, cultural, religious and economic institutions that the prevailing concept of gender got constructed. We say masculine for a boy and feminine for girls. We say aggressive, bold, objective warrior, intelligent for men; and week, feeble, shy, second sex, second fiddle, weaker sex, emotional, beautiful, good natured and nice for women. These concepts have made the mindset to behave differently towards both genders. It is also the root cause to discrimination. The pre set attitude, the rigid mind looks at both male and female genders to behave in a particular fashion, wear the set clothes, eat prescribed food, do set roles, and share prescribed responsibilities.

Gender inequalities arising out of the above prescription have given the ascribed status to both men and women because of the construction of gender happening due to social and cultural practices.

4.3.4 Social and cultural Practices:

The social and cultural practices have assigned (a) gender roles and responsibilities, unknowingly given rise to (b) gender discrimination at different institutional levels. Both these issues are being separately discussed in the following two (a) and (b) paragraphs.

a) Gender Roles and Responsibilities

The social and cultural practices have given rise to certain kinds of roles and responsibilities for both men and women, girls and boys. Men will take control outside the

domains of home and women are supposed to be home bound. All the household chores and functions related to home, home relations were given to women who are continuing as it as of without fail. Women are expected to perform those chores not even looking at their interest, aptitude and need. Similarly men without fail have to perform duties of earning bread and butter for the family. He is supposed to be the primary earner and she is the secondary earner if at all opportunity or need arises, and thus, the second fiddle.

However in the changing scenario, when women have started working and are becoming a part of work and labor force, participating whether in the organized or unorganized sector, both the types of roles have come on her shoulders, home and out of home, as a result of which she has become doubly burdened.

b) Discrimination at different levels of Institutions

There are four main levels of institutions for both genders. However within these main institutions, there are a number of sub levels of institutions related to social, cultural, religious, economic and political power institutions. If we discuss family as an institution, how within the family the roles, relations, responsibilities and power structure play different parts towards women and girls, men and boys. These amazing behaviours, expected attitudes have given rise to burning issues, social evils and stigmas in the society. Family leads to community and society, and all members of the family, community and society irrespective of their genders have to go to their respective institutions of work place, may be school or any other educational, technical or professional institution, religious, economic or institution of power such as panchayat, legislative assembly etc. These work places have their own equations towards both genders, and in terms of access to facilities, status, promotions and freedom, but the discriminations continue to exist towards female gender.

However the intervention of the State, the government institutions in terms of amendments in laws, various pro-gender schemes, policies and programmes are helping the girls and women to overcome inequalities and harassments in some ways.

Group Activities

- Discuss the birth of a boy and girl in family of each culture.
- Share your experiences on the attitude towards health, food and nutrition for girls and women during their adolescence, puberty, pregnancies, motherhood and old age.
- Give case study/observations/experience if any on sexual harassment in schools and work places.
- Discuss the chores given to girls and boys in homes and schools by family and teachers/head-teachers respectively
- Share experiences and mention cases on owning of resources of property and power by men and women
- What is the meaning of freedom for girls and boys ? Discuss
- Define and discuss participation in sports and physical education for girls and boys.

4.3.5 Gender : An Issue of Human dignity

Various feminists and activists, civil societies, and government structures have realized that gender issues are not women's is issues alone. They are people's issues, issues of both men and women. Gender equality is an issue of human dignity, a human rights issue. Any harm to the dignity of 50% human resource is unjust. The gender justice, social justice for human right, the woman rights' are the issues that need to be addressed by the states with all its sincerity. Various state policies, five year plans are becoming gender inclusive, gender friendly and pro-gender. Gender budgeting has become essential for each policy, programme and plan of the government. Issue of gender sensitivity has become part and parcel of each activity of government, non-government, private and public sectors.

4.3.6 Redefining Gender Roles and Relations

In view of the above stated discussions in terms of redefining gender roles and responsibilities, sharing, caring and new roles and relations are touching each ones lives. The global trend is to look afresh at gender and its needs. In the present days, in changing times, amongst young generations for girls and boys, men and women, new roles and

responsibilities are shouldering them. Both need to understand each other's new roles. The changing new gender roles are defining new changing gender relations. .

4.3.7 Mainstreaming Gender Peace and Harmony in Schools and Classrooms

Schools and classrooms which were gender blind and gender neutral in many ways, which operated with a kind of gender bias and stereotyping ingrained in them are now becoming free of those evils. The NPE 1986, its POA 1992, National Focus Group (NFG) on 'Gender Issues in Education', and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 have been the landmarks of their times in making education gender sensitive and by changing mindset of all stakeholders in education. Curriculum, syllabus and textbooks, are being revised to integrate and mainstream gender sensitivity for bringing harmony and peace in classrooms and schools.

Check your progress

- What is biological (b) and social (s) ? Tick (b)/(s) whatever appropriate on each of the option given below.

Sex	Roles
Gender	Relations
Girls	Responsibilities
Boys	Attitude
Men	Mindset
Women	Culture

- Differentiate between masculine and feminine terms
- Discuss social and cultural practicses of your community for both genders and give 3 to 4 examples of gender discrimination operating in different institutions
- How would you integrate gender dignity in your school and classroom practices.
- Redefine gender relations in one or two lines only

4.4 LET US SUM UP

The module overall brings all issues forefront, related to gender inequality and discrimination through various discussions, experiences, and logically sets the ball rolling to sensitize the teachers and the community to change their mindset towards each gender, to be open, flexible and redefine gender relations in terms of sharing roles and responsibilities in the new changing scenario of globalization, economic liberation and humanization.

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STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GIRLS EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

No doubt our Government is taking all possible measures to improve girls' education. A large number of non-government/voluntary organizations are actively involved in promoting education among girls, especially for education of girls belonging to SC/ST, from rural and remote areas and other disadvantaged groups. As a teacher your role is very important in improving education of girls at elementary level to universalize the elementary education so as to achieve the national goal of EFA and SSA. Moreover girls without completing this cannot get an access to secondary level of education. We will not be able to solve the problem of shortage of women teachers, especially in rural areas unless girls complete school level education and thus become eligible for school teaching. Moreover girls' participation in higher, general, technical, vocational and professional education cannot be improved. Therefore, you have to make efforts to (i) bring more and more girls to schools, especially of the rural girls and the ones belonging to disadvantaged groups, (ii) you have to make communication to retain them in schools, as well as (iii) you have to improve their participation in learning processes and (iv) help them grow up as confident persons with a positive self-image.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you shall be able to:

i) Understand various strategies to promote girls education, particularly at elementary level.

ii) Explore some innovative strategies to promote education of girls at elementary level.

iii) Make suitable adaptation in classroom teaching learning process for improving education of girls at elementary level.

5.2 STRATEGIES

Some strategies are presented below which can be used to improve enrolment, retention and participation of girls in schools. You may also devise your own strategies. For your convenience these strategies are described in different headings but they are not mutually exclusive and are in fact complementary to each other.

5.2.1 Awareness Generation

- Sensitise your nearby community/society about providing equal access and opportunities for growth and development, including education to both boys and girls'. You can visit nearby village or town, interact with parents and local community and discuss with them the need and ways to promote gender equality and girls education. You can also take help of drama, radio, and local folk media.

- Contact members, Village Education Committee, Mahila Mandals and NGO's actively working for girls' education (if any) to organize special enrolment drive such as Ma-Beti Melas for enrolling girls at primary and upper primary levels especially those girls belonging to SC/ST, minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

- Make parents aware about various incentives given by Central/State Governments and NGOs to school going girls especially girls belonging to SC/ST, minorities and other disadvantaged groups e.g. merit scholarships, residential faciliites, Balika Shivir, KGBV etc.

- Sensitise parents about health and nutritional requirement of girls as education and development is affected by these factors to a great extent. Moreover, make parents understand that the girls studying at upper primary level (i.e. girls in the age group of 11-14 years) require additional nutrients especially iron and calcium as they have already entered puberty. You can take help of local health worker or doctor in this task.

5.2.2 School Curriculum and its Transaction

Once girls are enrolled in the schools, all efforts have to be made (i) to retain them in schools as nearly 60 percent girls leave schools without completing upper primary education and (ii) to improve their participation in educational process and their achievement also. This can be done through gender friendly content and process of school education. Our school curriculum, textbooks, other teaching learning materials and curriculum transaction should be free from gender bias and stereotyping (showing men and women in their traditional roles). The contribution of women needs to be acknowledged and women need to be duly represented in active and unconventional roles.

The National Policy on Education 1986 recommended having undifferentiated curriculum for both boys and girls upto secondary level. Consequently we are following common undifferentiated curriculum for both boys and girls upto secondary level till date. Besides, the National Policy on Education 1986 and its POA (revised in 1992) emphasized the need to use education for promoting gender equality and for removing gender bias from school curriculum, textbooks and curriculum transaction. To translate the recommendations of NPE, 86 into action, the Government of India, especially the NCERT has been working consistently for promoting gender equality through school curriculum, textual material and curriculum transaction. The School Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education brought out by NCERT in 1988 included Equality between Sexes as one of the ten crore components of National Curriculum. The NCERT has evaluated its textbooks from gender point of view. Several states have also evaluated their textbooks and tried to make them gender inclusive. The NCERT and state/district level institutions sensitise textbooks writers, teacher educators and teachers to promote gender equality through textbooks, other teaching-learning material and curriculum transaction. The National Curriculum Framework brought out by NCERT in 2005 strongly advocates equal educational

opportunities to all children including girls. To make unequal, equal NCF 2005 recommends that "the formal approach, of equality of treatment, in terms of equal access or equal representation for girls is inadequate. Today, there is a need to adopt a substantive approach towards equality of outcome, where diversity, differences and disadvantage are taken into account". It further states "in order to make it possible for marginalised learners, especially girls to claim their rights as well as play an active role in shaping collective life, education must empower them to overcome the disadvantages of unequal socialization and enable them to develop their capabilities of becoming equal citizens" (NCF 2005, p.6). NCERT is in the process of writing new set of textbooks based on NCF 2005. Great care has been taken not only to make them free from gender bias and gender stereotyping but also to reflect contribution of women in different walks of life.

Inspite of all these efforts you may still find some textbooks (which are the main means of curriculum transaction even today in rural remote areas) having gender bias/stereotyping, for example the books showing (i) pre-dominance of male characters (ii) men in lead roles and women in passive/serving roles (iii) pre dominance of males in occupational roles like doctors, farmers, leaders, engineers, shopkeepers etc. and women appearing in domestic roles like mother, wife, daughter, maid etc.

You would have to take your own initiatives in undoing the damage, which such textbooks and other teaching-learning material can do to children by giving the message that men are powerful, strong and efficient and women are weak, dependent and less efficient.

ACTIVITY

Analyse the content, language, illustrations and visuals of various textbooks prescribed by your State for primary/upper primary level, from gender point of view.

5.2.3 Curriculum Transaction

Teacher's expectation, encouragement and attitude influence self-concept/ self-perception of children which in turn affects their academic performance. A large number of our girls especially from rural areas have very low self concept right from very early age (this is because of our socialization practices where boys are valued more). Our socialization practices lead girls to believe that keeping quiet, restrained and subdued are womanly

virtues. The low self-concept among girls affects their participation in classroom activities, their academic achievement and later on their participation in non-traditional courses and occupations. Very few girls raise their hands to answer difficult questions even if they know the answer especially in some subjects like Science and Mathematics. Number of girls studying Science, Mathematics, Technical-professional courses is gradually increasing but is comparatively much lower than that of boys still today. Your attitude and practises must nurture positive self-concept among girls. You have to discover their potential and nurture it by giving appropriate opportunities and encouragement. Through your classroom behaviour you must communicate to the girls that they are as able, valuable and responsible as boys. The following hints may be useful in improving participation of girls in schooling/classroom process.

- Do not segregate boys/girls in the classroom (if you are teaching in a co-educational school) e.g. letting girls sit at one side and boys on the other side of the classroom.
- Have two sets of monitors in a class- a girl and a boy.
- Give opportunities to both girls and boys to participate in all types of activities. Discourage gender-based distribution of roles and responsibilities in school like asking girls to receive a chief guest and boys to demonstrate gymnastics.
- For group activities make mixed groups of boys and girls.
- If girls in the class are passive listeners, make special efforts to improve their participation e.g by asking them to read aloud in class and directing questions at them and encouraging them to answer.
- Avoid gender based allocation of activities under Work Education or work experience e.g. cooking, sewing work for girls and maintenance of electrical gadgets for boys.
- Discourage gender based participation of children in games, sports and cultural activities organized in and outside the school.
- Gender equality needs to be promoted through transaction of different subject areas. Few examples are given below:

5.2.4 Teaching of Language

- Avoid use of sexist language denigrating either sex. Communicate using gender inclusive language in the classroom.

- Use language as a means to develop a sense of mutual respect and dignity, cooperation and sharing among boys and girls.
- Do not communicate in stereotypical language of calling boys as strong, intelligent and girls as delicate, emotional etc.
- Encourage children to speak about their personal experiences from home to school giving equal opportunity to girls and boys.
- Teachers may tell true stories of local brave women, educated women, women writers/poetess, women entrepreneur, eminent and talented women using their own resources such as newspapers and life sketches, magazine etc.

5.2.5 Teaching of Mathematics

Many people think that there is no scope of gender bias and gender stereotyping in mathematics curriculum and its transaction.

To identify this you have to evaluate your mathematics textbooks and your transactional process. The content, language and visuals of mathematics textbooks need to be analyzed to see the gender imbalance or gender equality. The scope of bias is there in the word problems related to various mathematical concepts or in human pictures used in the book or illustrations. Remember mere inclusion of women/girls in mathematical problems is not sufficient; you have to see in what roles they are projected.

See the following examples related to the concept of addition:

"In a playground 20 boys were playing football and 22 girls were watching them. The sports' teacher Mr. Satish was also present on the playground. How many persons were there in the playground?

In the above example the number of female characters is more than the male characters but they are projected in stereotyped role. If girls/women are represented like this in several examples/visuals in a book then it may promote gender bias/stereotyping. In such a situation you have to construct alternate problems/illustrations related to various mathematical concepts representing both male and female characters as equally as possible. The example of addition mentioned earlier can be made gender inclusive in the following manner:

"In a playground 12 boys and 11 girls were playing football and 30 children were watching them. One sports teacher was also present there. How many persons were there in the playground?"

While transacting mathematics you may keep in mind the following points to promote girls education and gender equality:

- Do not use only male pronouns/pictures to introduce a unit or concept.
- Work at the domestic level is equally important and productive and should be projected (through mathematical problems) as a responsibility to be shared by all members of the family.
- Dignity of work in all walks of life should be reflected through exercises projecting computation of time, labour and energy consumed at each job.
- Reinforce growing participatory role of women/girls in all works of life. Depict women/girls in non-traditional, new occupational roles such as women as managers, traders, executive, businesswomen, driving their own vehicles, pilots, scientists, industrialists etc.
- Show both women and men in problems/visuals related to money transaction e.g. buying, selling.
- Highlight through mathematical illustrations that both sexes have equal right in the family property.
- Develop decision-making competence in both boys and girls equally through teaching of mathematics.
- Through mathematical problems help students understand that female population is less than male population in our country and it is declining in each census.
- At the primary stage children shall comprehend the problems in numbers and by arithmetic computation only.
- A large number of parents and even some teachers think that girls are less capable of studying and doing well in mathematics and science subjects. Studies have shown and you might have observed that many teachers pay more attention to boys than girls while teaching mathematics and science subjects. You as a teacher must be convinced that girls are capable of doing equally well as boys in these subjects. If they are not doing well in these subjects then try to understand the reasons for this trend. A large

number of school going girls assist their mothers or other family members in various household/economic activities and thus do not get sufficient time to study at home. That is why their performance in subjects which require more time like mathematics get affected and gradually they start disliking the subject. It is only a matter of giving them right opportunities, encouragement and timely help if they need to improve their performance in these subjects.

5.2.6 Teaching of Environment Studies (EVS)

Environment consists of two major elements-nature and human being, and the aim of Environmental Studies is to let children see nature and humans as an integrated whole by interacting with their physical and social environment. Therefore, the teacher has to ensure that children become conscious of their own selves, their physical and social well-being and their duties and rights such as right to life, freedom of expression and mutual cooperation, caring and respectful attitude towards one another. While teaching EVS to elementary school children, you, as a teacher, have to keep following points in mind to promote girls education:

- Physical attributes and difference do not reflect superiority or inferiority. Therefore, teacher should not discriminate between boys and girls being different in physical traits but she has to take note of individual differences in capabilities, abilities and aptitudes of children.
- Basic body structure, functions and requirements are also similar for both male and female human being, therefore, no discrimination should be made in providing food, health care and learning experiences.
- Avoid describing women and men in stereotyping roles e.g. women fetching water, cooking, looking after children and man working outside homes in offices and fields.
- Do not use only male pronouns (he) or male visuals to show persons in various economic activities e.g. farmer as he, scientists as he, surgeon as he. Women are also contributing in these activities. Show them also.
- While teaching EVS involve girls in conducting experiments, practical activities. If they are hesitant for any reason, encourage them. Motivate them to ask questions.
- Collect information about eminent women who may be a scientist, historian, social worker, panchayat member, activist, local leader and give their examples at relevant

place while teaching EVS. This will motivate girls to continue their education and may help in developing a positive self-concept among them.

Activities

1. With the help of girls and boys of your class, collect pictures and illustrations from old newspapers, magazines, books showing participation of women in walks of life (at national/local level) in different various roles like doctor, scientist, farmer, teacher, pilot, social worker, freedom fighter, sports person, leader, mathematician, artist etc. For example, Mrs. Indrani Singh-First Women Pilot of Airbus, Kalpana Chawla-First Indian Space Scientist, Fatima Biwi- First Woman Chief Justice of India, Ms. Arundhati Ghosh- First Woman Foreign Service Officer, Mrs. Kiran Bedi- First Woman I.P.S, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali- Freedom Fighter etc. Put some of these pictures on the walls of the classroom. Make use of them at appropriate place while teaching various school subjects like social sciences, language or mathematics.
2. Identify potential dropout girls i.e. girls who are irregular, latecomers and/or have poor academic performance. Try to meet their parents in parent teacher meetings or go to their homes to know the reasons for their low participation in schooling. Plan suitable interventions accordingly e.g. you can organize remedial class for low achiever girls and you may pursue their parents to let them continue their studies.
3. Make a group of 3-4 low achiever girls/boys with one high achiever girl to help them in their studies during recess or free time and acknowledge progress made by them every week (inculcating a sense of being able in girls).

5.3 LET US SUM UP

Teacher's role is very crucial in improving education of girls at elementary level to achieve the goal of UEE under SSA. You have to make efforts to bring girls to schools, retain them and improve their participation and achievement too. Special attention has to be given to rural girls and girls from disadvantaged sections of society. To achieve this goal, you have to employ various strategies. Strategies have to be used to create awareness about girls development and education among parents, community members and local governments. As a teacher, it is essential for you to be familiar about strategies of transacting various components of curriculum in a gender bias free way in and outside the classroom. You have to make conscious efforts to highlight contribution of women/girls in different walks of life through teaching learning process of various school subjects. The strategies presented in this chapter are only suggestive; you may devise your own strategies also.

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EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN FOR FACILITATING GIRLS EDUCATION

Structure

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The universal right to elementary education for growth and development of nation has been well conceived all over the world. Providing free and compulsory education to all children of age group 6-14 yrs is a Constitutional mandate. However, more than six million children in our country are not attending the primary school and nearly two third of these children are girls. The share of girl's enrolment is much lower than that of boys' at elementary level (46.42 per cent). Since independence, though girls participation has increased many folds at elementary level (from 22.1 percent in 1950-51 to 46.42 per cent in 2004-05) but not much significant impact in girls share has been noticed in total enrolment over five years (from 42.3 per cent in 2000-01 to 46.42 per cent in 2004-05). Without education it is a difficult task on the part of women to exercise their rights and meet their aspirations. Hence, there is the need to empower women in the society for the social development and reconstruction. Mahatma Gandhi has rightly advocated for the

"women empowerment" and said that ***"of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity to me, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge."*** Therefore, he was in favour of educating women and giving them all freedom which men enjoy. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of girls children in family and society as well.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this unit, you would be able to :

- Discuss various issues and efforts to provide training on woman empowerment.
- Gain insight into various aspects of woman empowerment
- Provide arguments in favour of women empowerment as a tool for reducing gender disparity at elementary level.
- Appreciate the need of women empowerment or education of girls at elementary level.

6.2 GOALS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The idea of equality is a means of empowerment of girls and women. Provision of education must be made accessible to more and more girls to eliminate gender disparity and nurture a new generation. Education of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and also empowering them to participate in decision-making.

The objective of women empowerment is to make women become an agent of social change to:

- Improve health, nutrition and education of the family;
- Ensure participation of women in decision making;
- Empower girls to examine their choices and claims as a fundamental right; and
- Ensure participation of women in social development and reconstruction.

Empowerment of girls is required for effective implementation of: i) better health and hygiene; ii) birth control and population control; iii) provision of traditional and spiritual value; and iv) improving social cohesion.

Principle of gender equality is also a constitutional mandate in our country and is enshrined in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principle. However, there exists a wide gap between the goals as reflected in the constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes and mechanisms on one hand and the situational reality of the education of girls and status of women on the other hand. Hence, there is the need of commitment and dedication on the part of administrators and implementators for realizing the objectives of gender equality as reflected in various policies and programmes.

According to National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) the objectives of women empowerment include:

- Creating environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- Enjoying all rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access to women to health care, equality of education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment and equal remuneration.
- Changing social attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- Mainstreaming gender perceptiveness in all the development process.
- Elimination of all discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

6.2.1 Meaning of Empowerment

Empowerment refers to process of gaining control over self, over resources and over process of decision making. Education for equality refers to enable girls to exercise their rights as well as contribute substantially in all spheres of growth and development. In the field of education empowerment refers to the following aspects:

i) Promote self-recognition, positive self image and self actualization;

ii) Stimulate critical thinking;

iii) Understand the concept of gender equality;

iv) Enable access to resources; and

v) Develop ability to analyze options and making choices.

Empowerment of girls is considered as a process where they can challenge relations of power and take control of their lives. Education is a potential instrument to realize this objective.

6.3 ASPECTS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

According to National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2005) "Gender", "Equality" and "Empowerment" of girls have been used as key words in educational documents for long. Gender has been viewed in terms of prc vision of equal facilities. Equality has focused on the formal or sameness approach that focuses on equal treatment rather than equality of outcome. Empowerment has been perceived on different perspectives like; i) eliminating discrimination against women; ii) improving social cohesion and iii) education for effective implementation of better hygiene.

6.3.1 Decision Making

Sharing of Power and participation in decision-making will definitely contribute towards achievement of the goals of empowerment. It is essential to provide equal access to and full participation of women in decision-making bodies for realizing, national goals and objectives. Women friendly personnel policies aim at encouraging women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

6.3.2 Gender Perspective

Mainstreaming of women's perspectives in all areas of development is quite essential to bridge the gap, if any. There should be an effective coordination and monitoring mechanism to assess women's issues and concerns from time to time. The National Policy on Education (1986) and Programme of Action (POA, 1992) emphasizes on women's education and clearly stated "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. There should be well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National system of Education will play a positive inventist role in the empowerment of women.

Despite various national and international commitments to gender equality and universalisation of elementary education, the ground realities are not encouraging especially in the context of education of girls from socially and economically marginalized areas.

6.3.3 Social Empowerment

Social empowerment is one of the important aspects of women empowerment to ensure their participation in various walks of life. It aims at bringing a radical change in perception and attitude of people to place women on an equal footing in our male dominated society. Women living in the society need to be independent in their thinking and decision making processes. Hence, there is the need of education that can make them really empowered and encourage them to join their hand with man in the process of national development.

Education is the instrument of growth and development to create an awareness of oneness on one hand and useful for the service of mankind on the other hand. Govt. of India including all state Governments continuously trying to universalise the elementary education through various programmes like ii) National Literacy Mission; ii) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; iii) Mid-Day Meal Programme; iv) National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL); and v) Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), etc. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act made education a fundamental right. Special measures have already been in operation to eliminate discrimination, universalize elementary education, eradicate illiteracy, create gender sensitise education system, increase enrolment and retention of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as ensuring social empowerment of women to facilitate education of girls.

Reducing gender disparity in elementary education is the focus of all interventions. Today educationists are in the favour of developing gender sensitive curricular and pedagogy at all levels of educational system. Social empowerment of women is essential to eliminate discrimination in the treatment of the girl child within the family and violation of her rights. This not only improve parental care but also level to maintain equal emphasis on the needs of children (boys and girls) and earmarking of sustainable investments in the areas relating to food, nutrition, health and education.

6.3.4 Economic Empowerment

Majority of population below poverty line are comprised of women. Programmes related to eradication of poverty must address the needs and problems of such women on one hand and its effective implementation to achieve the target on the other hand. Poor women can be motivated and mobilized by offering them a series of alternatives for their economic and social empowerment. It certainly enhances their potentialities to be self-independent in making decision. At the same time contribution of women as producers and workers must be recognized to enhance their motivation.

Economic empowerment of women is an essential requirement for effective implementation of policies, Programmes and interventions to enhance their capacity to meet the negative social and economic impacts.

6.3.5 Developing Partnership

Coordination among government and non-government organizations including voluntary organizations, associations, federations and women organizations and organizations dealing with education, training and research is an essential requirement for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of various policies and programmes in the process of empowerment of women. They must be provided with need-based support related to resources and capacity building of functionaries for effective functioning. It facilitates sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas, strategies and mechanism, networking with organization for the benefit of larger target group of the society.

6.4. BENEFITS OF WOMEN EMPOVERMENT

Women empowerment is one of the burning issues before all national and international agencies. It is believed that dream of social development cannot be realized, ignoring half of the population (women) and leaving them in dark. In this context, Gandhiji has rightly said that ***"Man should learn to give place to woman. A country or community in which women are not honoured can not be considered as civilized*** ". Unfortunately even today there is lot of hurdles/barriers in the way of education of girls (details have already been discussed in Unit 3). Hence empowering women to improve the educational status of girls must be given top priority. Empowerment of women in the society is considered to be the key resource for educating girls and realizing numerous benefits for betterment of society. In the light of reducing gender disparity at elementary level, empowering women is not an option rather a compulsion to achieve the target. It helps in providing following benefits to our society:

Improving health and sanitation: It is believed that women's education is associated with longer life expectancy, lower infant and maternal mortality and lower fertility. Education of women aims at improving access to the use of information, health services and increasing income of family. Women's access to income can be beneficial to children's health and education as well.

Delayed marriage: Early marriages still a norm in many part of our country, particularly in rural areas. Even today parents consider educating daughter as burden. It is found that educated women tend to marry later, with implications for their economic opportunities and choices.

Lower fertility: Educated women have lower desire and aim at actual family size. They likely to use contraception and have longer interval between birth. Children of educated mothers, especially daughters are more like to get education. It helps in reducing gender disparity in the field of education.

Education of mother has a greater positive effect on education of children. One of the important concern of women empowerment is changing family perception of investment i.e. perception of parents that the economic return for educating daughter is lower.

Empowered women can contribute substantially to overcome such blind beliefs and superstitions from society.

6.5 ACTIVITY

i. Prepare a list of activities that can be carried out by school teachers in the light of empowering women in the society.

ii. Discuss your role as a teacher to develop some innovative strategies to reduce gender disparity at elementary level.

6.6 LET US SUM UP

The term 'capacity' and 'empowerment of girls' have been key issues of educational policy for achieving the national goal of Education for All (EFA) and ensuring contribution of women for national development. It is conceived by all that 'gender is not a women's issue rather it is people's issue. Training of boys to confront themselves and patriarchy is an important aspect of teaching-learning process. Elimination of gender disparity is essential for cultivating a feeling of trust, security and harmony in all. This unit focuses on need and importance of women empowerment for social development and universalization of elementary education for achieving the goal of Education for All.

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SOME IMPLICATIONS OF GIRLS EDUCATION

Bridging all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010 is one of the major objectives of SSA for universalisation of quality elementary education/education for all. Through this present discussion, an attempt has been made to reflect strategies and interventions needed for improving the education of girls at elementary level in our country. Education of girls plays an important role in national development and reconstruction. It is high time not only to undertake a variety of policy implications but also to develop a variety of strategies for its effective implementation at school level so as to alleviate problems of girls' education.

Every school must be provided with adequate sanitary facilities for the girls. It can serve variety of purpose i.e. increasing enrolment, reducing dropout of girl children, developing positive attitude of parents towards education of girl children as well as motivation and enthusiasm in the mind of tender hearted girls to join and continue in schools. Environment of classroom and school must be made attractive with relevant pictures, diagrams and events related to girls' education to increase girls' enrolment and their active participation in schools. It is essential to ensure safety of girls both in school as well as on the way to reach the school. Issues of safety and security in and around the school block the girls' attendance in school. Personal safety of girl is a major concern, so parents do not allow girl child to attend school, which is far away from home. These community need to play a major role in protecting girls from violence. Women organization must come forward to contribute in this regard. Community must be empowered through a variety of ways. Active involvement of community is the need of the time. Society needs to be sensitised and mobilized for providing quality elementary education to girls children. Even girl children do not feel themselves secured in school environment, it is because of the absence of female teachers or lack of female teachers in school. It is the community who needs to watch, to protect girls from abuse and harassment.

Again activities (Curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular) must be modified so as to accommodate girl children with comfort in our local schools. Teachers must be trained exclusively to develop new methodologies and implement health and sex education on variety of ways to make teaching learning process attractive. Assignment related to

homework may be reduced to allow the girl child to attend school as well as do their responsibility at their respective homes. More and more local female teachers need to be appointed so as to attract girl child. Special guidance cell may be opened with specially trained female guidance worker/or by providing special orientation to female teachers to deal with problems of grown up girls at school and provide necessary guidance to tackle those issues. Besides curriculum training on a variety of work education programmes, handicrafts and other works related to household duties and responsibilities should be provided in school as additional components. Content related to health education, nutrition, growth and development, reproductive health may be included in the curriculum with family oriented education. Pre-school training centres need to be opened in rural areas to attract the attention of parents and community towards education of girls children, developing and strengthening morality of girls children and prepare them for primary level with strong will and motivation for strengthening their foundation. It is essential to make them ready for primary schooling. Improving the nutritional status of child is the essential requirement on the part of education of girl children as well as their mother. It should be followed by health care activities to develop the confidence of girl children in particular. Short term orientation programme for the mothers should also be organized during the local holidays and festival periods in the school campus or in the village community centres to provide information/awareness related to primary health, education of girls and roles and responsibilities of girls and importance of girls education as well.

Efforts have already been taken in various parts of the country on effective implementation of ICT through multimedia packages for providing education to girls as well as developing awareness in community towards need and importance of girls' education. It has the potential to generate dialogue between the teachers and taught. Aspects of multimedia like print material, audio, video, radio broadcast, TV broadcast, teleconferencing etc. can effectively be used for reaching the unreached with quality support system. This can be used for developing positive parental attitude and community participation on educational programme for reducing gender disparity. Early marriage and pregnancy are widespread and common in many parts of our country. It prohibit the girls from attending school or returning to school after the birth of their child, so provision may be made (laws and policies) for establishment of school/alternative centres for such group of children to bring them back to school. It can develop self-esteem and psychological comfort in them to continue in their studies. Statistics revealed that majority of children who are not registered

at birth are girls. Parents find it difficult to admit their child without birth certificate. This is another case for not being able to enrol girl child in school. Though reasons are many relating to girls' drop out in rural areas but major concern relating to it are: (i) unfavourable attitude of parents (i.e. parents are not interested to send their grown up girls to schools), (ii) involvement of girl children in domestic activities (i.e. they need to look after their siblings at early stage and work to supplement their family members at later stage of life) and (iii) poverty of parents. Owing to the above reasons, parents develop negative attitude towards education of their girl children.

Though there are many national and internal goals/commitments relating to education of girls and even legal frame work/laws are there to protect the rights of girl child, but due to certain real difficulties and fear parents/children are denied their right to education. Laws relating to EFA particularly education for girls though exists but may not be enforced. At the present time to achieve the target of gender equality in education by 2015, focus should be laid on strategic interventions relating to; (i) development and improvement in school facilities with special focus on basic necessities like sanitation and water; (ii) improvement of school environment with regard to flexible school timing (timing must be set what is suitable to them particularly when they are free from domestic chores); (iii) security of girl child (protection from sexual harassment of their girl children; (iv) hostel arrangement for girl children (partially beyond middle level); (v) middle school and secondary schools are far away from villages. So it does not allow the rural girl children to attend the school as there is a lack of transport facilities (So like primary education, secondary education need to be accessible to children living in rural areas); and (vi) It is essential to make the girl children more and more comfortable in school, so it is important to focus on appointment of more and more female teachers in rural village schools.

EDUCATION OF GIRLS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education of women is an important aspect for boosting the social and economic development of the country. Promotion of Girls Education particularly at Elementary Level is to bring certain benefits for the Society in the form of social development and reconstruction. Promotion of Education of Girls needs to be in the form of content and quality of schooling, teachers, materials, enrolments, retentions, acquisition of basic literacy and numeric skills. The purpose behind it was to bring social development across variety of sectors, increasing economic productivity, political participation, health and sanitation, delayed marriage and making effective investment for future generation. Though there are many other possible ways and methods to achieve this national goal, but education of girls is an effective way which has simultaneous impact on all aspects. Significantly, India is the second largest educational system in the world (after China) with a total enrolment of 114.6 million at primary and 41.3 million at upper primary levels; out of which 47.52 million and 18.72 million are girls at primary and upper primary

levels respectively. As one of the major goals of SSA is to promote social justice, all gender and social category gaps are expected at primary level by 2007 and at elementary level by 2010. In view of elementary education being a fundamental right of all the children in the age group of 06-14 years as per the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002. Universalization of Elementary Education is the target set by Govt. of India to be achieved by 2010.

Before discussing the detail about the girl's education, this unit focuses on an overview of girls education in our country.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

i) Get a comprehensive picture related to status of literacy in our country.

ii) Understand the situation pertaining to enrolment of girl children at elementary level.

iii) Develop awareness on status of drop out of girls children at elementary level.

iv) Know about the status of female teachers at elementary level.

v) Able to explore some ideas related to basic facilities available for enhancing education of girls at elementary level.

1.2 OVERVIEW

Education of girls in India, particularly in rural areas is one of the major concerns of the educationists, administrators and policy makers. Out of the total children who are not attending the schools, more than two-third of them are girls. Education of girls is the prime focus of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for achieving the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education. Hence, it is considered that there is a need to visualize the status of education of girls at elementary level and the problems that usually hamper their education.. Government of India exhibits a wider range of commitment on accelerating education of girls especially the ones belonging to SC/STs and rural areas. Despite this, much need to be done to improve the educational status of girl children particularly in rural India. During 2002-03, the enrolment of girls at primary level was 38.09 million, at upper primary level 24.31 million, and at secondary/higher secondary level it was 28.59 million. At all levels enrolment status of girl children is lower than that of boys and this

difference goes on increasing as we move towards higher level. Though participation of girls at all stages of education has been increasing steadily since 1951 to 2003 (primary level from 28.1 per cent to 46.8 per cent, middle level from 16.1 percent to 43.9 percent and secondary/higher secondary level from 13.3 percent to 41.3 percent) yet the girls' participation is still below 50 percent at all stages of education. It is also reported that drop out rates among girls are at higher side than that of their boy counterparts.

1.2.1 Female Literacy Status

Table 1: Literacy Status in India

Year	Total Literacy (in million)	Rate of Literacy			Male-Female Difference
		Male	Female	Total	
1951	60.1	27.2	8.9	16.7	18.3
1961	105.5	40.4	15.4	24.0	25.0
1971	161.5	46.6	22.0	29.5	24.0
1981	241.0	56.4	29.8	36.2	27.4
1991	362.2	63.1	39.3	43.3	23.8
2001	666.94	75.3	53.6	64.84	21.7

***Exclude J&K**

Source: Selected Educational statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India.

As shown in Table I, there has been a considerable increase in the rate of literacy of female in last two decades. It was noticed that during 1951-2001, the rate of female literacy has been increased by 6 times where as in case of male, it is 2.8 times (MHRD 2002-03). Again it was observed that since 1981, the male-female difference is getting closer which is a positive indication on the part of the education of women in our country. However, it is noticed that the rate of female literacy is 53.6 per cent as against the male literacy which is of 75.3 per cent. This shows that still the per cent of literacy among female is 21.7 per cent less than that of male. Hence, it is imperative to take a special intervention for enhancing the education of female in our country even today.

1.2.2 Enrolment of Girls

Table 2: Enrolment of Girls by School Category (in million)

Year	Primary			Upper Primary		
	Total	Girls	% of Girls	Total	Girls	% of Girls
1994-95	105.1	45.1	36.4	14.3	14.3	39.29
1995-96	107.1	46.2	37.5	14.8	14.8	39.47
1996-97	108.2	46.8	38.1	15.2	15.2	39.89
1997-98	110.3	48.0	39.5	15.9	15.9	40.25

1998-99	110.9	48.2	40.3	16.3	16.3	40.45
1999-2000	113.6	49.5	42.1	17.0	17.0	40.38
2000-2001	113.8	49.8	42.8	17.5	17.5	40.88
2001-2002	113.9	50.3	44.8	18.7	18.7	41.74
2002-2003	93.4	44.1	30.5	13.48	13.48	44.20
2003-2004	108.02	51.27	36.3	16.29	16.29	45.02
2004-2005	114.6	54.52	41.3	18.72	18.72	45.32

Source:* i) *Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India.
ii) Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA

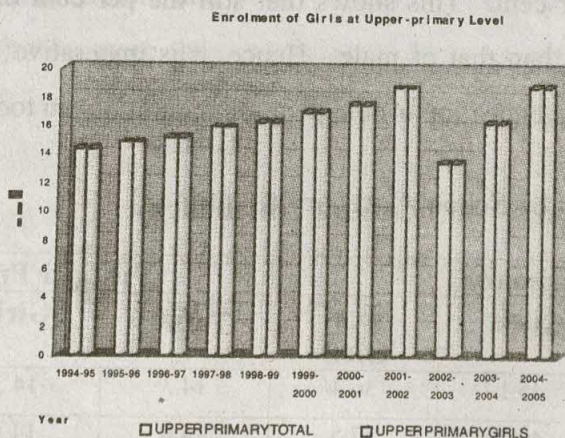
Enrolment of Girls is an important aspect for the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and Education For All (EFA) as well. Data from Table 2 reveals that the number of Girls' enrolment has increased from 45.1 million (36.4 per cent) in 1994-95 to 54.52 million (41.3 per cent) in 2005-06. In case of Upper Primary Level, there is an increase in the number of Girls from 14.3 million (39.29 per cent) in 1994-95 to 18.72 million (45.32 per cent) in 2004-05.

1.2.3 Enrolment of Scheduled Caste (SC) Girls

Table 3: Percent of SC Enrolment to Total Enrolment and Percent of SC Girls Enrolment to Total SC Enrolment

Year	Primary		Upper Primary	
	% of SC to total Enrolled	% of SC Girls to total SC Enrolled	% of SC to total Enrolled	% of SC Girls to total SC Enrolled
1994-95	17.5	42.9	14.2	13.4
1995-96	17.8	44.4	14.4	13.2
1996-97	18.6	44.9	14.9	14.1
1997-98	18.6	46.2	15.4	14.9
1998-99	17.5	48.0	15.1	15.9
1999-2000	17.9	48.0	14.9	16.1
2000-2001	18.6	48.9	15.6	16.7
2001-2002	18.9	49.2	16.7	17.4
2002-2003	19.5	46.8	18.20	43.49
2003-2004	21.30	47.31	19.33	43.92
2004-2005	20.73	47.43	20.10	44.73

Source: i) ***Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India***

ii) ***Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA***

Percent of SC Enrolment at Primary & Upper-primary Levels

PRIMARY % OF SC to total enrolled   UPPER PRIMARY % OF SC to total enrolled

With regard to the enrolment of minority (SC and SC girls) it is revealed from Table 3 that 17.5 percent of children were SC out of total enrolled in 1994-95 at primary level where as it was only 14.2 percent at upper primary level. There were 42.9 percent SC girls at primary level and 13.4 percent at upper primary level. The number of SC girls increased from 42.9 percent during 1994-95 to 47.43 percent during 2004-05 at primary level. There is no appreciable improvement in enrolment of SC girls at primary level. Similar is the situation at upper primary level as well. This reflects that inspite of various measures undertaken at both national and state levels, the situation with regard to education of girls still need a lot of improvement.

1.2.4 Enrolment of Scheduled Tribes (ST) Girls

Table 4: Percent of ST Enrolment to Total Enrolment and percent of ST Girls Enrolment to Total ST Enrolment

Year	Primary		Upper Primary	
	% of ST to Total Enrolment	% of ST Girls Enrolment to Total ST Enrolment	% of ST to Total Enrolment	% of ST Girls Enrolment to Total ST Enrolment
1994-95	8.6	41.86	6.0	15.0
1995-96	8.8	43.18	6.1	13.8
1996-97	9.1	45.05	6.2	14.4
1997-98	8.7	45.9	6.3	14.9
1998-99	8.3	·46.9	6.5	14.8
1999-2000	9.3	44.08	6.9	15.9
2000-2001	9.5	49.47	7.2	16.7
2001-2002	10.2	49.0	8.0	16.3
2002-2003	11.78	45.97	8.55	39.80
2003-2004	10.20	46.61	8.08	42.02
2004-2005	10.69	46.76	8.59	42.58

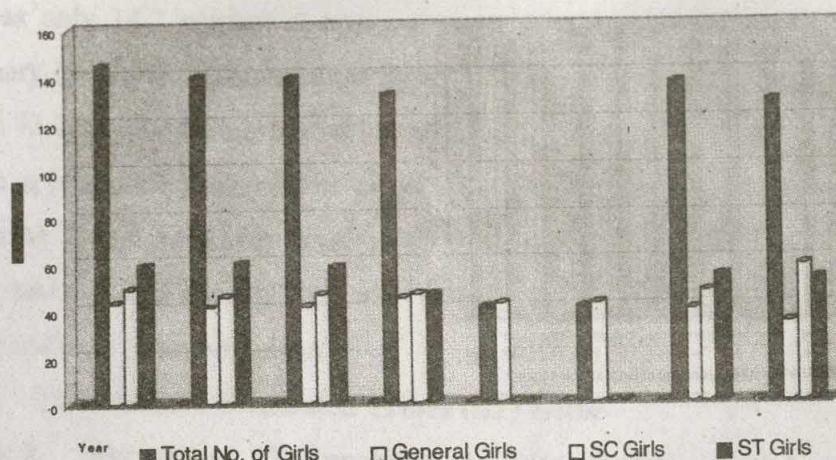
Source: i) Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India
ii) Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA

As shown in Table 4, the total enrolment of SC children to total enrolment at primary and upper primary levels in 1994-95 is 8.6 per cent and 6.0 per cent respectively. Hence, there is a gradual decrease in percentage of enrolment of ST children from primary to upper primary level. This shows the drop out rate of ST children from lower level to higher level. It is also revealed from the table that the situation is not improved even in 2004-05 as during this period, the enrolment of ST girls at primary level was 11.78 per cent and at Upper Primary Level, it remained as 8.55 per cent. Though from 1994-95 to 2004-05, there is a slight improvement with regard to the enrolment of ST girls, but at the primary and upper primary levels, it remained very low in comparison to the SC girls. That is to say that the rate of enrolment of ST girls is at the lower side than that of SC girls both at primary and upper primary level.

1.2.5 Drop out of Girls

Table 5: Dropout Rates of Girls to Total Drop Outs

Category / Year	General		SC Students		St students	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
1995-96	42.1	43.0	45.7	48.5	56.6	58.9
1996-97	40.2	40.9	42.7	45.2	56.5	60.0
1997-98	39.2	41.5	44.7	46.6	55.1	58.1
1998-99	42.4	44.7	44.3	46.6	44.3	46.6
1999-2000	40.3	42.3	-	-	-	-
2000-2001	40.7	41.9	-	-	-	-
2001-2002	39.0	39.9	45.2	47.1	52.3	54.1
2002-2003	34.9	33.7	41.5	58.2	51.4	52.1

Source: *i) Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India*
ii) Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA

As observed from the above Table 5, the rate of drop out Girls has decreased from 43.0 percent (in 1995-96) to 33.7 percent (in 2002-03) at primary level. In case of SC girls, the rate of drop out has been fluctuating from 1995-96 to (48.5 percent) to 2004-05 (58.2 percent). Similar is the situation with regard to drop out rate of ST girls which fluctuate from 58.9 per cent in 1995-96 to 51.4 per cent in 2002-03 (MHRD, 2002-03)

1.2.6 Female Teacher

Table 6: Distribution of Female Teachers by School Category, 1994-2005 (in million)

Year	Primary			Upper Primary		
	Total	Female	% OF. Female	Total	Female	% OF Female
1994-95	1.69	0.53	31.36	1.16	0.41	35.35
1995-96	1.74	0.56	32.18	1.18	0.42	35.59
1996-97	1.75	0.56	32.00	1.20	0.43	35.83
1997-98	1.82	0.59	32.42	1.23	0.59	47.96
1998-99	1.91	0.66	34.55	1.27	0.46	36.22
1999-2000	1.93	0.69	35.75	1.30	0.47	36.15
2000-2001	1.90	0.68	35.79	1.33	0.51	38.35
2001-2002	1.93	0.72	37.31	1.47	0.55	37.41
2002-2003	1.92	0.75	39.06	1.59	0.65	40.88
2003-2004	1.59	0.55	34.59	2.20	0.52	23.64
2004-2005	1.67	0.60	35.93	2.62	0.64	24.43
2005-2006	1.90	0.71	37.37	2.81	0.72	25.62

Source: i) Selected Educational Statistics 2002-03, MHRD, Govt. of India.
ii) Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2004-05, NIEPA.

It is revealed from Table 6 that there is an increase in the recruitment and deployment of female teachers during 1994-2005. Since the special campaign of in-service training there is a steady increase in the trend with regard to percent of female teachers undergoing in-service training at upper primary level than at primary level. (NIEPA, 2004-05).

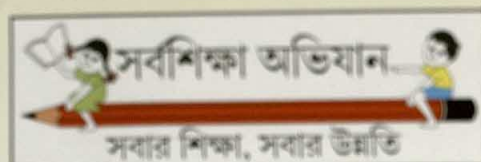
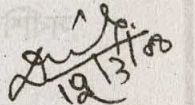
শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণ কর্মসূচী

বালিকা শিক্ষা সংক্রান্ত

(উচ্চ প্রাথমিক)

পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সর্বশিক্ষা মিশন

রাজ্য প্রকল্প দপ্তর

বিকাশ ভবন, কলকাতা - ৯১

জাতি, ধর্ম, বর্ণ, লিঙ্গ নির্বিশেষে প্রতিটি মানুষের রয়েছে বেঁচে থাকার অধিকার, স্বাধীনতার অধিকার, শিক্ষার অধিকার — ভারতীয় সংবিধান এই অধিকার প্রদান করে। শিক্ষার প্রয়োজন শুধু সাক্ষরতার জন্য নয়, মানুষের অন্তর্নিহিত সুপ্ত মানবসত্তাকে সমৃদ্ধ করে জাতির উন্নয়নের কাজে নিয়োজিত করাই হল শিক্ষার মূল লক্ষ্য ও উদ্দেশ্য।

ভারতীয় সংবিধানের ৪৫ নং ধারার সুস্পষ্ট নির্দেশ, ১৯৯৮ সালের দেশের শিক্ষামন্ত্রীদের প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষার সার্বজনীনতার সপক্ষে সমবেত অঙ্গীকার, ১৯৯৯ সালের প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা বিষয়ক জাতীয় কমিটির অঙ্গীকারের ফলশ্রুতিতেই একবিংশ শতাব্দীর সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযান (মিশন)। প্রাথমিক ও উচ্চ প্রাথমিক শিক্ষাকে সার্বজনীন করার লক্ষ্যে সর্বশিক্ষা মিশনের অন্যতম প্রধান প্রয়াসই হল লিঙ্গ বৈষম্য দূর করে কন্যা শিশুর জন্য উন্নতমানের শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করা। বালিকা শিক্ষা কর্মসূচীর লক্ষ্য হল সমাজে মেয়েদের প্রতি বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ দূরীকরণের জন্য তাদের প্রয়োজনীয়তার বিষয়ে সামাজিক সচেতনতা গড়ে তোলা।

কন্যাশিশুরা বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষালাভে যে সকল প্রতিবন্ধকতার সম্মুখীন হয় শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকারা যাতে তাদের সহায়তা করে পড়াশুনার ক্ষেত্রে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে পারেন সেই উদ্দেশ্যেই এই প্রশিক্ষণ সহায়িকার অবতারণা। ভারতীয় সমাজে লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের গতি প্রকৃতি, বৈষম্য দূরীকরণের জন্য সাংবিধানিক ও আইনগত নীতির পরিবর্তন, শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে মেয়েদের অগ্রগতি, পাঠ্যক্রমের আদানপ্রদানের মধ্য দিয়ে ইতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী ইত্যাদি প্রতিটি বিষয়ে অবহিতকরণের যে উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হয়েছে তাতে এই সহায়ক পুস্তিকাটি বিশেষ ভূমিকা পালন করবে।

এই প্রশিক্ষণ সম্ভারটি তৈরী করার ক্ষেত্রে প্রশাসনিক আধিকারিক, উপরাজ্য প্রকল্প অধিকর্তাগণ এবং নারী শিক্ষার সংযোজক শ্রীমতী পম্পা ভক্ত যে নিরলস প্রয়াস গ্রহণ করেছেন তা প্রশংসার দাবী রাখে।

আশা করি মাননীয় শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকাবৃন্দ, সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিবর্গ এবং অন্যান্য সকলস্তরের মানুষের কাছ থেকে মূল্যবান মতামত ও সুপারিশ এই প্রশিক্ষণ সম্ভারটিকে সমৃদ্ধ করতে সাহায্য করবে।

(ডি. নারিয়ালা)

রাজ্য প্রকল্প অধিকর্তা

পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সর্বশিক্ষা মিশন

বিষয়সূচী

নারী পুরুষের সামাজিক ভূমিকার চালচিত্র

মানুষ সমাজবন্ধ জীব। সমাজের রীতি নীতি আইন কানুন সবই সমাজের স্বার্থ-রচিত। আর এই সামাজিক রীতি অনুযায়ী জীবনযাপন করাই সামাজিক স্বীকৃতি পাওয়ার একপ্রকার অলিখিত নিয়ম। সমাজের দুটি জাতি নারী ও পুরুষ - তাদের সামাজিক সত্তার পৃথক রূপ দিন, কাল, গোষ্ঠী, রাজ্য, দেশভেদে আবহমান কাল ধরে বহুযত্নে লালিত হচ্ছে। এই ভিন্নতার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেই আমাদের বুঝতে হবে লিঙ্গভিত্তিক প্রভেদ কি।

নারী ও পুরুষ এই দুই ভিন্ন সত্তার নামকরণ হয়েছে তাদের ভিন্ন দৈহিক গঠনের জন্য যা একেবারেই প্রকৃতিগত, এই দৈহিক প্রভেদের উপর ভিত্তি করে নির্ধারিত হয়েছে তাদের জন্য ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ভূমিকা, দায়িত্ব, কর্তব্য, সামাজিক প্রত্যাশা ও স্বীকৃতি লাভের মাপকাঠি। এই ভিন্নতাই হল সামাজিক লিঙ্গভেদ যা এখন আর ভিন্নতার (**differentiation**) পর্যায়ে নেই বরং পৌঁছে গেছে বৈষম্যে (**discrimination**) আসুন চোখ রাখি এই লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের প্রচলিত চিত্রে।

প্রাপ্ত বয়স্ক নারী পুরুষের আচার আচরণ দেখে ছোটছোট শিশুরা নিজেদের ছেলে ও মেয়ে বলে আলাদাভাবে চিনতে শেখে। তারা দেখে জগৎ সংসারে 'মেয়েদের কাজ' ও 'ছেলেদের কাজ' বলে দুটি আলাদা জিনিস আছে। তারা জানতে শেখে মেয়েরা হবে চুপচাপ, জড়োসড়, লাজুক ও ভীরু প্রকৃতির। আর ছেলেরা হবে স্বাধীনচেতা, সক্রিয় ও সাহসী। বিনা প্রশ্নে পরিবারের সকলের হুকুম তামিল করাই হল মেয়েদের কর্তব্য। ঘরের গৃহকোণই সমাজের মেয়েদের স্থান হিসাবে নির্ধারিত হয়েছে আর গৃহধর্মই হল মেয়েদের গুরুদায়িত্ব। অন্যদিকে বৃহত্তর বিশ্বের কর্মক্ষেত্র পুরুষের ক্ষেত্র বলে বিবেচিত।

আমাদের সমাজের ছেলেদের যে এক বিশেষ স্থান আছে তা মেয়েরা বুঝতে পারে অনেক ছোট বয়স থেকেই। পুত্র সন্তান জন্মানোর সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই শঙ্খধ্বনি, উলুধ্বনি, আনন্দ উৎসবের বন্যা বয়ে যায় অথচ কন্যা সন্তান জন্মালে এক অস্বাভাবিক বিষন্নতা সকলের মুখে ফুটে ওঠে। পরপর তিনবার পুত্র সন্তান কামনা করেও যখন কন্যা সন্তান জন্মায় তখনও বাড়ীর লোকেরা বলতে শুরু করে 'পরের বার নিশ্চয়ই ছেলে হবে। .... সংসারে বাতি দেবে'। পুত্র সন্তানের জন্য নার্স, দাইদের আব্দার একটু বেশী হয় অথচ কন্যা দেখলে তাদেরও মুখ ভার। এসব দেখে ছোট ছোট মেয়েরা বুঝতে পারে ভাইয়ের গুরুত্ব কত বেশী।

মায়েরা ভালোবেসে তার ছেলেকে ঘুম পাড়ায় 'রাজা', 'রাজকুমার' প্রভৃতি সম্বোধনে অথচ মেয়েকে বলে-

'মেয়ের নাম ফেলি

পরে নিলেও গেলি

যমে নিলেও গেলি'।

ছেলের হাতে তুলে দেয় খেলনা, বন্দুক, গাড়ী আর মেয়েদের দেয় পুতুল ও খেলনাবাটি। কারণ ঘরসংসারই তাদের জীবনের শেষ গতি। ছেলে ও মেয়েদের খাদ্যরীতিতেও অনেক ফারাক দেখা যায়। সংসারের মাছ, মাংস, ডিম, দুধ প্রভৃতি সুস্বাদু ও পুষ্টিকর খাদ্য ছেলেদের জন্য বরাদ্দ অথচ মেয়েরা খাবে শেষ পাতে এবং পরিমাণও কম। কৈশোর বয়সে মেয়েরা যদি বেশী খায় তাহলে তাদের শারিরীক ও মানসিক বিকাশ তাড়াতাড়ি হবে ফলে মেয়েদের নিরাপত্তা নিয়েও সবাই দুশ্চিন্তায় পড়ে যায় এই বুঝি 'মেয়ে আমাদের মুখে চুনকালি মাখালো'। তাই মেয়েদের যৌবনারম্ভকে একটি দুর্ভাগ্যজনক ঘটনা বলেই মনে করা হয়। মেয়েদের রজঃস্রাব অতি স্বাভাবিক শারিরীক পরিবর্তন অথচ এর জন্যই তাদের লজ্জায় পড়তে হয়, অনেক সময় পরিহাসের পাত্রী হতে হয়। দক্ষিণ ভারতে এই সময়ে বিশেষ কিছু সামাজিক অনুষ্ঠান পালন করা হয় এবং এরপর থেকেই মেয়েরা ঘাঘরার উপর অর্ধেক শাড়ী পড়তে শুরু করে। (সূত্রঃ শিশুকন্যা থেকে সম্পন্ন মানুষ)

বয়ঃসন্ধিকালের পর থেকেই মা বাবার একটি চিন্তা শুরু হয় মেয়ের কবে বিয়ে দেবে। সন্ধ্যার পর মেয়েদের বাইরে যাওয়া নিষেধ। ছেলেদের সঙ্গে কথা বলা বারণ, জোরে কথা বলা, উচ্চস্বরে হাসা মানা। কারণ স্বামীগৃহে সুখে সংসার করতে গেলে তাকে হতে হবে সুশীলা, ধৈর্যশীলা, সর্বংসহা প্রয়োজনে সকলের গঞ্জনা, অত্যাচারও মুখ বুজে সহ্য করতে হবে কারণ তাতেই থাকবে 'সংসারে শান্তি'। স্বামীর কল্যাণই তার জীবনের একমাত্র ব্রত। তাইতো গুরুজনেরা তাদের সদ্যবিবাহিতা মেয়েটিকে আশীর্বাদ করে বলে 'শত পুত্রের জননী হও' আর শাশুড়ী বলেন 'তোমার শাখা সিঁদুর অক্ষয় হোক'। স্বামীর দীর্ঘায়ু কামনা করেই চলতে থাকে নানা উপবাস, ব্রতপালন। তার সাথে ভগবানের কাজে প্রার্থনা করতে থাকে একটি পুত্র সন্তানের কারণ এতেই মন জয় করা যাবে সকলের আর বাড়ীর বউটি হবে 'সুলক্ষণা'। উত্তরপ্রদেশের মেয়েরা তাই ভগবানকে বলে -

'প্রভুজী তোমায় প্রার্থনা করি

পায়ে পড়ি করে বার

পরের জন্মে আমাকে মেয়ে দিওনা

যদি চাও নরকে জায়গা কর আমার'

(সূত্রঃ সেভ গার্ল চাইল্ড অর্গানাইজেশন)

মেয়ে সন্তানের উপর খরচ শুধুই বাজে খরচ কারণ যে তে 'অপরের ধন'। বিরাট অঙ্কের পণের টাকা দিয়ে সুপাত্রস্থ করতে পারলে বাবা-মা 'কন্যাদায়' থেকে মুক্তি পাবে তাইতো ছেলেরা (পূর্ববঙ্গ ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গে) বিয়ে করতে যাওয়ার আগে মাকে বলে 'মা, তোমার জন্য দাসী আনতে যাচ্ছি'। পরিবারের ছেলেরাই হল কর্তা। ঘরের চার দেওয়াল তাদের জন্য নয়, বাইরের খোলা উন্মুক্ত আকাশ তার জন্য। সে হবে বেপরোয়া, বর্হির্মূখী, সাহসী কারণ তাকে জীবনে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে হবে, উপার্জন করতে হবে, স্ত্রী-পুত্রের দায়িত্ব নিতে হবে। সে 'মেয়েদের মত কাঁদতে' পারবে না তাকে হতে হবে জয়ী। পরিবারের সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার ভার তার।

ছেলেদের জীবনের মূল্যও অনেক। সুন্দরবনের মেয়েদের আর্থসামাজিক চিত্র প্রাকৃতিক বৈশিষ্ট্যের জন্য বড়ই সংগ্রামময়। নারী-পুরুষ উভয়েই জীবনের ঝুঁকি নিয়ে কাজ করে। ভোরের আলো ফুটতেই বউ-ঝিরা প্রাণের ঝুঁকি নিয়ে চিড়িং মাছ ধরতে নামে হাঁটুজলে। অথচ একটা অদ্ভুত ব্যাপার হল স্বামী-স্ত্রী যখন একসাথে জাল ফেলে তখন স্ত্রী থাকে গভীর জলের দিকে আর স্বামী থাকে পাড়ের দিকে কম জলে। কুমীরে ধরলে আগে বউটাকে নেবে। কতটা মর্মান্তিক ভাবুনতো। (সূত্রঃ দৈনিক স্টেটস্‌ম্যান, অক্টোবর ২০০৭)

এইভাবে বড় হতে হতে কন্যাশিশুর তার নিজের সম্পর্কে এক অসম্পূর্ণ ও বিরূপ ভাবমূর্তি গড়ে ওঠ। সে ভীরু, শঙ্কিত, পরনির্ভরশীল, আত্মবিশ্বাসহীন, অযোগ্য, সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে অক্ষম — অতএব সে অসম্পূর্ণ। ভারতবর্ষের গ্রামাঞ্চলে তথা শহরাঞ্চলে সর্বত্রই অধিকাংশ মেয়ের চিত্র একই। তবে আদিবাসীদের মধ্যে এবং যেসব অঞ্চলে মাতৃতান্ত্রিক সমাজব্যবস্থা প্রচলিত সেখানে মেয়েরা 'উত্তরাধিকার সূত্রে' অপেক্ষাকৃত সহজেই আত্মমর্যাদাবোধ ও আত্মবিশ্বাস গড়ে তোলে।

একটি ছেলের মত একটি মেয়েরও যে স্বতঃস্ফুর্ত বিকাশের প্রয়োজন আছে, অধিকার আছে সেকথা সকলকে স্বীকার করতে হবে। অন্ততঃ একবিংশ শতকের নারী তাদের বিদ্যা, বুদ্ধি, যোগ্যতা, সাহসিকতা দিয়ে নিজেদের বিশ্বের দরবারে প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছে। তারাও আজ ছেলেদের থেকে কোন অংশে কম নয়। তাইতো আমরা বলি -

নারীকে আপন ভাগ্য জয় করিবার

কেহ নাহি দিবে অধিকার।

নারীদের অবস্থান
পরিসংখ্যানগত আলোচনা

" Invest only Rs. 600 now and save your precious Rs. 50000 later ...."

---- লিঙ্গা নির্ধারক ক্লিনিক[১]

ভারতবর্ষের আদমশুমারীর সালভিত্তিক তথ্য অনুযায়ী স্ত্রী-পুরুষ অনুপাত ক্রমাগত নিম্নগামী। ২০০১এর পরিসংখ্যা অনুযায়ী ভারতবর্ষের ৮০% জেলায় শিশু লিঙ্গা অনুপাত ভীষণ ভাবেই কমে গেছে। উন্নয়নশীল দেশ ভারতবর্ষ তথ্যপ্রযুক্তিতে বিশ্বের দরবারে নিজেকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেও শিশু লিঙ্গা অনুপাতে এর স্থান সর্বাপেক্ষা নীচে। বিগত কুড়ি বছরে কেবল ১০ লক্ষ কন্যাভ্রূণ নষ্ট করা হয়েছে। যদিও ভারতীয় বিচারব্যবস্থা ২০০৭ সালটিকে 'Awareness year of female foeticide' হিসাবে ঘোষনা করেছে।

ভারতের বিভিন্ন রাজ্যে লিঙ্গা অনুপাতের সারণি (২০০১ আদমসুমারী) এবং তথ্যভিত্তিক বিশ্লেষণ -

		1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
	INDIA	972	964	955	950	945	946	941	930	934	927	933
1	Andhra Pradesh	985	992	993	987	980	986	981	977	975	972	978
2	Arunachal Pradesh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	894	861	862	859	901
3	Assam	919	915	896	874	875	868	869	896	910	923	932
4	Bihar	1061	1051	1020	995	1002	1000	1005	957	948	907	921
5	Chhatisgarh	1046	1039	1041	1043	1032	1024	1008	998	996	985	990
6	Goa	1091	1108	1120	1088	1084	1128	1066	981	975	967	960
7	Gujarat	954	946	944	945	941	952	940	934	942	934	921
8	Haryana	867	835	844	844	869	871	868	867	870	865	861
9	Himachal Pradesh	884	889	890	897	890	912	938	958	973	976	970
10	Jammu & Kashmir	882	876	870	865	869	873	878	878	892	896	900
11	Jharkhand	1032	1021	1002	989	978	961	960	945	940	922	941
12	Karnataka	983	981	969	965	960	966	959	957	963	960	964
13	Kerala	1004	1008	1011	1022	1027	1028	1022	1016	1032	1036	1058
14	Madhya Pradesh	972	967	949	947	946	945	932	920	921	912	920
15	Maharashtra	978	966	950	947	949	941	936	930	937	934	922
16	Manipur	1037	1029	1041	1065	1055	1036	1015	980	971	958	978
17	Meghalaya	1036	1013	1000	971	966	949	937	942	954	955	975
18	Mizoram	1113	1120	1109	1102	1069	1041	1009	946	919	921	938
19	Nagaland	973	993	992	997	1021	999	933	871	863	886	909
20	Orissa	1037	1056	1086	1067	1053	1022	1001	988	981	971	972
21	Punjab	832	780	799	815	836	844	854	865	879	882	874
22	Rajasthan	905	908	896	907	906	921	908	911	919	910	922
23	Sikkim	916	951	970	967	920	907	904	863	835	878	875
24	Tamil Nadu	1044	1042	1029	1027	1012	1007	992	978	977	974	986
25	Tripura	874	885	885	885	886	904	932	943	946	945	950
26	Uttar Pradesh	938	916	908	903	907	998	907	876	882	876	898
27	Uttaranchal	918	907	916	913	907	940	947	940	936	936	964
28	West Bengal	945	925	905	890	852	865	878	891	911	917	934
	Union Territories											
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	318	352	303	466	574	625	617	644	760	818	846
2	Chandigarh	771	720	743	751	763	781	652	749	769	790	773
3	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	960	967	940	911	925	946	963	1007	974	952	811
4	Daman & Diu	995	1040	1143	1088	1080	1125	1169	1099	1062	969	709
5	Delhi	862	793	733	722	715	768	785	801	808	827	821
6	Lakshadweep	1063	987	1027	994	1018	1043	1020	978	975	943	947
7	Pondicherry	NA	1058	1053	NA	NA	1030	1013	989	985	979	1001

Source : Census of India, 2001.

- উপরিউক্ত তথ্য অনুযায়ী প্রতি এক হাজার জন পুরুষের অনুপাতে মহিলাদের সংখ্যা ক্রমাগত কমছে। ১৯০১ এর আদমসুমারী অনুযায়ী সেখানে লিঙ্গ অনুপাত ছিল ৯৭২, ২০০১-এ তা এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে ৯৩৩-এ।
- অর্থাৎ প্রতি দশ বছর অন্তর যে লোকগণনা হয় তার মাঝে অসংখ্য মহিলা নিখোঁজ হয়ে যান।
- কেরালার লিঙ্গ অনুপাত সর্বাধিক (১০৩৬) এবং ১৯০১ সাল থেকে সেই ধারা বজায় রেখেছে।
- ২০০১-এর সেনসাসের হিসাবে হরিয়ানার অনুপাত সর্বনিম্ন (৮৬১) এবং পাঞ্জাব ও হরিয়ানা এই রাজ্য দুটিতে বিগত ১০০ বছরে মহিলাদের সংখ্যা প্রতে এক হাজার পুরুষের সাপেক্ষে কখনোই ৯০০-এর অধিক হয়নি।
- পাঞ্জাবে শিশু লিঙ্গ অনুপাত ৭৭৫ এবং চন্ডিগড়ে সাম্প্রতিক ১০টি গ্রামের সমীক্ষার ভিত্তিতে দেখা গেছে যে প্রতিটি গ্রামেই ছেলেদের সংখ্যা মেয়েদের তুলনায় বেশী।
- ভারতবর্ষে ১৮ বছরের নীচের জনসংখ্যা (৪০০ লক্ষ) সর্বাধিক
- প্রতি বছরে ২৭ লক্ষেরও বেশী শিশু মৃত্যুর শিকার হয় এবং এই সংখ্যায় কন্যাশিশুরা এগিয়ে।
- ৫ থেকে ৯ বছরের ৫৩% মেয়ে অশিক্ষিত
- প্রতি দুজন মেয়ের একটি অপুষ্টির শিকার
- প্রতি বছর যে ১২ লক্ষ কন্যা শিশু জন্মায় তার মধ্যে ১ লক্ষ মারা যায় ১ বছর বয়সের আগেই।
- আর প্রতি ৬টি কন্যাশিশুর মধ্যে একজনই মারা যায় লিঙ্গ বৈষম্যের কারণে
- প্রতি দশজন মহিলার একজন শিশু অবস্থায় যৌন হেনস্থার শিকার
- ভারতবর্ষের ৪০২টি জেলায় ২২৪টিতে মহিলা মৃত্যুর হার সর্বাধিক

(সূত্র : **Save Girl Child Organisation**)

পুত্রশিশু পাওয়ার তীব্র আকাঙ্খাকে বাস্তবায়িত করার জন্য অনাকাঙ্খিত কন্যা ভ্রূণের মৃত্যু সত্যই মর্মান্তিক। **Action India of women** দ্বারা দিল্লীতে যে সমীক্ষা চালানো হয়েছে তাতে দেখা গেছে উচ্চশিক্ষিত সচেতন মহিলারাই কন্যা ভ্রূণ নষ্ট করার পরিসংখ্যানে এগিয়ে। এর থেকে ভারতীয় জনসংখ্যা বিশেষজ্ঞরা এই মতপ্রকাশ করেছেন যে জনসংখ্যা নিয়ন্ত্রণের যে প্রচেষ্টা সারা ভারতবর্ষ জুড়ে চলছে তার দ্বারা **Two-child family**-র ধারণা জনপ্রিয় হয়েছে ঠিকই এবং 'সম্পূর্ণ পরিবার' (**Complete family**) গঠনের উদ্দেশ্যে অন্ততঃ একটি পুত্রশিশু থাকাটা প্রায় বাধ্যতামূলক হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। ফলস্বরূপ ভারতীয় চিরন্তন লালিত পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজের ধারাকে বজায় রাখার অভিপ্রায়ে অগণিত কন্যা শিশু অকালে প্রাণ হারাচ্ছে।

যেকোন দেশের সমাজ তথা রাষ্ট্রব্যবস্থার প্রাথমিক দায়িত্বই হল প্রত্যেকটি মানুষের বেঁচে থাকার অধিকারকে সুনিশ্চিত করা কিন্তু ভারতীয় সমাজব্যবস্থায় কন্যা শিশু পৃথিবীর আলো দেখার আগেই কেবল কন্যা হওয়ার অপরাধে ভ্রূণ অবস্থাতেই অকালে ঝরে পড়ে নতুবা সারা জীবন ধরে বৈষম্যের শিকার হয়। ইহা সত্যই লজ্জাজনক।

মহিলাদের মৃত্যুর হার খুব বেশী ঃ

সদ্যোজাত শিশুকন্যা থেকে আরম্ভ করে ৩৪ বছর বয়সী মহিলা অবধি সমস্ত নারীদের মৃত্যুর হার বিশ্লেষণ করে দেখা গেছে যে, যেকোন বয়সের গ্রামীণ মেয়েদের মৃত্যুর হার খুবই বেশী (৩৪ বছর বয়সীদের পর অবশ্য এই ধারায় পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করা যায়)

- ❖ ৫ বছরের কম বয়সের সব শিশুদের মৃত্যুর হার শহরের তুলনায় গ্রামে প্রায় দ্বিগুণ
- ❖ সাম্প্রতিক একটি সমীক্ষা অনুযায়ী, ভারতে ৬০% এরও অধিক মৃত্যু ঘটে ০—৯ মাসে ৩০% ঘটে ১—৪ বছরে এবং ১০% হয় ৫—৯ বছরে।

(সূত্র : **Female Mortality high up North – Express News Service)**

মহিলাদের মৃত্যুর হার বেশী হওয়ার কারণ -

(১) কন্যা ভ্রূণ হত্যা, সদ্যোজাত কন্যাসন্তান হত্যা

এই বছরেই আমাদের রাজধানী শহরে পলিথিন ব্যাগে মোড়া কন্যা শিশুর দেহ পাওয়া গেছে আস্তাকুঁড় থেকে। ফেব্রুয়ারী মাসের গোড়ায় মধ্যপ্রদেশের রত্নম জেলায় এক হাসপাতালের বাইরে সদ্যোজাত কন্যাশিশুর হাড়ের টুকরো উদ্ধার করা হয়েছে। আরো দূর্ভাগ্যজনক হল আগষ্ট মাসের শেষেরদিকে পাঞ্জাবের প্যাট্রন শহরে ১০০টি কন্যাভ্রূণ পাওয়া গেছে Abortion Clinic এর বাইরে। (সূত্র ঃ Female foeticide unabated in modern India by Pritha Roy Chowdhury, Meninews, 2007)

(২) জন্মের পর থেকে মেয়েদের স্বাস্থ্যের অযত্ন, প্রয়োজনীয় পুষ্টির অভাব, কৈশোরে এবং যৌবনেও সমান অবহেলা।

(৩) অপরিণত বয়সে বিয়ে ও সন্তান হওয়ার ফলে, সন্তান প্রসবের সময় ও পরে প্রয়োজনীয় ডাক্তারি সুযোগ সুবিধা না পাওয়ায় মেয়েদের জীবনের ঝুঁকি খুব বেড়ে যায়।

ইউনিসেফের রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী রাজস্থানের ৮২ শতাংশ মেয়েরই বিয়ে হয় ১৮ বছরের নীচে, ১৫ শতাংশ গ্রামীণ মহিলার ১৩ বছর বয়সের আগেই বিয়ে হয় আর ৫২ শতাংশ অর্থাৎ সিংহভাগ মহিলারই প্রথম সন্তান প্রসব হয় ১৫ থেকে ১৯ বছর বয়সে। যদিও ভারতীয় আইন অনুযায়ী মেয়েদের ১৮ বছরের নীচে আর ছেলেদের ২১-এর নীচে বিবাহ দন্ডনীয় অপরাধ কিন্তু রাজস্থানের মেয়েদের বিয়ের বয়সের গড় ১৬.৬ বছর, এর পরেই বিহার (১৭.২ বছর) ও মধ্যপ্রদেশের (১৭ বছর) স্থান।

এছাড়া মধ্যপ্রদেশের ভূপাল শহরের ৬৫ মাইল উত্তর-পশ্চিমে অবস্থিত রাজগড়ে ২০০৫ সালের মে মাসে একশোরও অধিক মেয়ের বিবাহ সম্পন্ন হয় প্রায় সপ্তাহ খানেক ধরে। 'Akkha Teej' নামে পরিচিত এই অনুষ্ঠানে যেসকল মেয়েদের বিয়ে হয় তাদের বয়স ৭ বছরের নীচে এবং স্থানীয় প্রশাসন এদের নামের রেকর্ড রাখার অতিরিক্ত কিছুই করে উঠতে পারেনি। (সূত্রঃ সেভ গার্ল চাইল্ড অর্গানাইজেশন)

(৪) মেয়েদের স্বাস্থ্যের উন্নতি এবং অন্যান্য উন্নয়নমূলক কাজের জন্য যে সমস্ত পরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করা হয়, সেগুলি সঠিকভাবে কার্যকর হয় না।

(৫) এছাড়া বিভিন্ন কুসংস্কার, অন্ধবিশ্বাস, সামাজিক রীতি-নীতি ও স্থানীয়/ আঞ্চলিক প্রথা স্বাস্থ্যকর জীবনযাপনের ক্ষেত্রে বাধা হয়ে দাঁড়ায়।

- এইসব কারণে ভারতবর্ষের গ্রামাঞ্চলগুলিতে মহিলাদের স্বাস্থ্যের অবস্থা ক্রমশ: খারাপ হয়ে আসছে। অথচ দেশের মোট জনসংখ্যার চারভাগের তিনভাগ মানুষ এই গ্রামঞ্চলগুলিতে থাকেন।
- যেসব জেলাগুলিতে লিঙ্গের অনুপাতের হার কম, সেখানে দুই থেকে পাঁচ বছর বয়সী শিশুদের মধ্যে ছেলেদের তুলনায় মেয়েদের মৃত্যুর হার বেশী।

সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষের মানচিত্র অনুযায়ী হরিয়ানা, পশ্চিম উত্তরপ্রদেশ, রাজস্থানের তিনটি জেলা ও মধ্যপ্রদেশের নদী উপত্যকা বরাবর একটি 'বারমুডা ট্রাংগেল' তৈরী হয়েছে সেখানে মহিলা মৃত্যুর হার সর্বাধিক এবং এখানকার ভয়াবহ পরিসংখ্যান মহিলা ও শিশু কল্যাণমূলক কার্যক্রমকে প্রকৃত অর্থেই বৃদ্ধাঙ্গুষ্ঠ দেখাচ্ছে।

সমগ্র বিশ্বের পরিস্থিতি পর্যালোচনার ভিত্তিতে দেখা যায় উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলিতে বিশেষত: এশিয়া (২৫৩,০০০) এবং আফ্রিকাতে (২৫১,০০০) মাতৃমৃত্যুর হার সর্বাধিক। এই মাতৃমৃত্যুর ৫৭ শতাংশ ঘটে থাকে বিশ্বের ১৩টি দেশে[২]। পরিসংখ্যানগতভাবে উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলিতে প্রতি ১৩ জনে ১ জন মায়ের শিশু জন্মানোর সময় মৃত্যুর ঝুঁকি থাকে সেখানে উন্নত দেশগুলিতে এই সংখ্যা হল প্রতি ৪১০০তে ১ জন। প্রতি বছর বিশ্বে ৫১৫,০০০ মহিলা গর্ভাবস্থায় এবং বাচ্চা জন্মানোর সময় মারা যায় এবং এর ৯৯ শতাংশই ঘটে উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলিতে[৩]। আরও আশ্চর্যজনক হল 'Near Misses'[৪] এর ধারণাটি। উন্নত দেশগুলিতে মাতৃমৃত্যুর হার এতই কম যে মুষ্টিমেয় সংখ্যক যেকজন মহিলা মারা যান তারাই হলেন **Near Misses** এবং জীবদ্দশায় তারা উপযুক্ত পরিচর্যা, পুষ্টি এবং যত্ন থেকে কোনভাবেই বঞ্চিত হন না।

[সূত্র: (১) Save Girl Child Organisation

(২) WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, 2003

(৩) Maternal Mortality : Women at Risk by Deeti Roy, July 02, 2006]

(৪) Pattinson RC, Hall M. Near misses : A useful Adjunct to maternal death inquiries, London, 2003 (231 – 243)]

নিজেকে জিজ্ঞাসা করুন ঃ

১) জাতীয় স্তরে লিঙ্গ অনুপাতের হারে আমরা কোথায় দাঁড়িয়ে?

২) ক্রমহ্রাসমান কন্যাশিশু কি সমাজকে সংকটের মুখে এনে ফেলেছে?

৩) আন্ত:রাজ্য বৈষম্যমূলক ঘটনাবলী কি আমাদের রাজ্যেও পরিলক্ষিত হয়?

৪) আপনার অঞ্চলে কন্যাশিশু ও মহিলাদের সংখ্যা কি ছেলেদের তুলনায় কমে যাচ্ছে? যদি হয় তার কারণগুলি বিশ্লেষণ করুন।

৬) একজন গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নাগরিক হিসাবে কন্যা ভ্রূণ হত্যা রুখতে এবং মহিলাদের জীবনের ঝুঁকিকে সুনিশ্চিত করতে আপনার সামাজিক দায়বদ্ধতা কতটা?

লিঙ্গের সমতা নীতি ও আপনি

আমাদের সমাজে নারীর অবস্থান কোথায় তা একেবারেই স্পষ্ট নয়। পরিবার থেকে শুরু করে সমাজ, রাষ্ট্র কোথাও, কোন স্তরেই এই চিত্রটি পরিষ্কার নয়। যদিও আপাতদৃষ্টিতে মনে হয় ছেলে ও মেয়ে একই স্তরে, একই জায়গায় অবস্থান করে কিন্তু দু'জনের জগৎ সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা, দু'জনের জীবন অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পূর্ণ ভিন্ন। একথা সত্যি যে, নিজেদের ক্ষমতার জোরে মেয়েরা বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে অনেকদূর অবধি এগিয়ে যেতে পেরেছে কিন্তু সামাজিক সাম্য কি এখনো প্রতিষ্ঠা করা সম্ভব হয়েছে? নারী আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস ঘাঁটলে দেখা যায় যে উনিশ শতকের গোড়ায় বহির্বিশ্বের দেশগুলিতে আন্দোলনের ফলস্বরূপ সারা বিশ্বের নারীরা পায় ভোটাধিকারের স্বীকৃতি। এই অধিকার নারী আন্দোলনের প্রথম প্রাপ্তি যা নারীর অবস্থানে ব্যাপক পরিবর্তন আনে। শিক্ষা, রাজনীতি, ও উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থায় নারী প্রবেশাধিকার পায়। কিন্তু সামাজিক অবস্থানে এই রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক পরিবর্তন নারীকে কিন্তু কাম্য সমানাধিকারে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে ব্যর্থ হয়। তাইতো সংবাদমাধ্যম, সংবাদপত্র এবং দূরদর্শন চ্যানেলগুলির মাধ্যমে নারী পাচার, নারী নির্যাতন, পণজনিত কারণে মৃত্যু, কন্যাশিশু নির্যাতন ও হত্যা, ধর্ষণ ও বিয়ে করার মিথ্যা প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়ে সহবাসের মত মর্মান্তিক খবরগুলি নিত্য জায়গা করে নিয়েছে। ট্রেনে, বাসে, রাস্তার জটলায়, আড্ডাখানায়, সভা-সম্মেলন ও আলোচনা সভাতে আমরা বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে বিতর্কের ঝড় তুলি ঠিকই কিন্তু নারীর অবস্থানের সদর্থক পরিবর্তন জন্য কোন ইতিবাচক পদক্ষেপ নিতে ব্যর্থ হই বা অনীহা প্রকাশ করি, তাইতো সংবিধান স্বীকৃত **'নারী-পুরুষের সাম্য অবস্থা'** আমাদের কাছে এখনো সুদূর এক স্বপ্নমাত্র।

মহিলাদের জন্যে কোনটি **'ঠিক ও শোভন'** সেই সম্বন্ধে চিরাচরিত ধারণা এবং নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার নীতি এখনো মহিলাদেরকে দমিয়ে রাখার জন্যে ব্যবহার করা হয়। তাই ন্যাশনাল ক্রাইম রেকর্ডস ব্যুরো যখন মনে করে যে, ২০১০ সালের মধ্যে সারা ভারতবর্ষে মোট জনসংখ্যা বৃদ্ধির হারকে ছাড়িয়ে যাবে মহিলাদের প্রতি সংঘটিত অপরাধের সংখ্যা, তখন তাতে আশ্চর্য হবার কোন কারণ নেই। এই কথাগুলির সত্যতা যাচাই করার জন্য আসুন চোখ রাখি কিছু বেসরকারী তথ্য (তথ্যসূত্রঃ এন.সি.আর.বি ২০০৫) এবং বিভিন্ন বেসরকারী সংস্থার গবেষণা থেকে পাওয়া তথ্যের উপর। সাথে সাথে এটাও মনে রাখা প্রয়োজন যে, এই যাবতীয় তথ্য মহিলাদের প্রতি সংঘটিত সমস্ত ধরণের অপরাধের সামান্য প্রতিফলন কারণ অধিকাংশ ঘটনাই অভিযোগ হিসাবে সামনে আসেনা।

এন.সি.আর.বি (N.C.R.B) ২০০৫ এর পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী—

- প্রতি ৯মিনিটে একজন মহিলা তার স্বামী বা অন্য কোন আত্মীয় পরিজন দ্বারা নির্যাতিত হন
- প্রতি ৬৭মিনিটে একটি করে পণজনিত মৃত্যু ঘটে
- প্রতি ১২মিনিটে একজন করে মহিলা যৌন হেনস্থার শিকার হন
- প্রতি ১৮মিনিটে একজন মহিলা ধর্ষিতা হন (তাদের ৮৬% ধর্ষিতা হন তাদের পরিচিত ব্যক্তির দ্বারা)
- প্রতি ৩৩মিনিটে একটি করে নারী অপহরণের ঘটনা ঘটে
- প্রতি ৩মিনিটে মহিলাদের প্রতি একটি অপরাধ সংঘটিত হয়

শুধু-তাই নয় সারাদেশে নারীপাচার, বিশেষ করে কমবয়সী কিশোরীদের পাচারের সংখ্যা বেড়েই চলেছে। পরিসংখ্যান অনুযায়ী ২০০৩ সালে যেখানে এই সংখ্যা ছিল ৪৬টি, ২০০৪-এ ৮৯টি, ২০০৫-এ তা বেড়ে দাঁড়ায় ১৪৯টিতে। ২০০৭ সালে আগষ্ট মাসে সংবাদপত্রে প্রকাশিত তথ্য অনুযায়ী সারা দেশের মধ্যে আমাদের পশ্চিমবঙ্গেরই একটি জেলা নারীপাচারে শীর্ষে রয়েছে।

জন্ম থেকে মৃত্যু পর্যন্ত একটি কন্যা শিশু যে আদরের নয় বরং অনাদরের পাত্রী, উপেক্ষার পাত্রী, একজন অনাকাঙ্খিত সত্তা সাম্প্রতিক সমীক্ষাগুলি কিন্তু সেই সত্যই প্রমাণ করে। তাই শিশু-নারী ও কন্যাভ্রূণ হত্যার সূত্রে ছ-কোটি নারী এই পৃথিবী থেকে মুছে গেছে, পরিবারিক হিংসার শিকার হচ্ছেন লক্ষ লক্ষ মহিলা।

নারী পণ্যের নারকীয় ব্যবসার বিকৃতি ও ভয়াবহতা প্রসঙ্গে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী কান্তি বিশ্বাসের প্রতিবেদন

রাষ্ট্রসংঘের শাখা সংগঠন 'মাদক দ্রব্য ও অপরাধ সংক্রান্ত সংস্থা' (ইউনাইটেড নেশনস্ অফিস অন ড্রাগস্ এণ্ড ক্রাইম) একটি বিশ্ব প্রতিবেদন পেশ করেছে। সেখানে মানুষকে পণ্য হিসাবে ব্যবহার করে বিশ্বময় কী ভয়ঙ্কর ব্যবসা চলছে তার এক বেদনাদায়ক রোমহর্ষক বিবরণ বিশ্বের দরবারে হাজির করেছে। আন্তর্জাতিক মনুষ্য-পণ্যের ব্যবসায় প্রতি বছরে ছয় থেকে সাত লক্ষ মানুষকে কেনাবেচা করা হয়। এই মনুষ্য পণ্যের ৭৭শতাংশ প্রাপ্ত বয়স্ক নারী এবং ৯ শতাংশ প্রাপ্তবয়স্ক পুরুষ। বাকী সবই শিশু। আবার শিশুদের মধ্যে ১২শতাংশ বালক। অবশিষ্টরা বালিকা। এই হতভাগ্য পণ্যের ৮৭ শতাংশকেই ব্যবহার করা হয় যৌন লালসাকে তৃপ্ত করার ব্যবসায়ে।

বর্তমান যুগে অতীতের মতো কৃতদাস প্রথা নেই, তবে ভিন্নভাবে চোরা পথে জীবিত মানুষকে প্রলুব্ধ বা প্রতারিত করে বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে সংগোপনে চলছে যে মানুষ পণ্যের ব্যবসা, যার প্রধান শিকার নারী ও শিশু - তাদের অবস্থা সম্পর্কে রাষ্ট্রসংঘের ঐ শাখা সংগঠন সমীক্ষা করে যে তথ্যবলি সংগ্রহ করতে পেরেছে সেগুলি প্রতিবেদন আকারে প্রকাশ করেছে 'Trafficking in Persons : Global Patterns – 2006) *। যে দেশগুলি থেকে এই মনুষ্য পণ্যকে সংগ্রহ করা হয়, যে দেশগুলির মাধ্যমে অন্য দেশে তাদের পাচার করা হয়, এবং যে দেশগুলিতে তাদের ঐ পাপ ব্যবসায় খাটানো হয় - এই তিন ধরনের দেশগুলিকেই পাঁচটি ভাগে ভাগ করে দেখানো হয়েছে। অত্যাধিক-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ, অধিক-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ, মাঝারি-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ, কম-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ এবং খুবই কম-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ - এই পাঁচ শ্রেণীতে দেশগুলিকে শ্রেণীবধ্ব করা হয়েছে। অধিক-ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ ৪৪টি দেশের তালিকায় ভারত আছে। যে দেশগুলির মাধ্যমে এদের পাচার করা হয় এমন মাঝারি- ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ ২১টি দেশের মধ্যে ভারত আছে। যে দেশগুলিতে এই হতভাগ্য মানুষগুলিকে ব্যবহার করা হয় তার অধিক ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ ২১টি দেশের মধ্যে আমাদের দেশের অবস্থান। সর্বমোট ১২৫টি দেশ থেকে এদের সংগ্রহ করা হয়, এবং ১২৮ টি দেশে এদের খাটানো হয়। বুঝতে কষ্ট হয় না যে সমগ্র দুনিয়াজুড়ে এই মনুষ্য ইতর ব্যবসা চলছে।*

১৭ থেকে ২৮ বছর বয়সের মহিলারাই এই নর-ব্যবসায়ীদের প্রধান লক্ষ্য। যারা এই চক্রান্তের শিকার হয় দেখো গেছে তাদের কোনো আত্মীয় বা পরিচিত ব্যক্তিরাই তাদের শুভানুধ্যায়ী সেজে তাদের বিভিন্ন প্রকারে লোভ দেখিয়ে সংগ্রহ করে। কখনো কখনো শিশুদের সুযোগ বুঝে চুরি করে এই ব্যবসায়ে পাচার করা হয়। আরো দেখা গেছে সরকারে কর্তব্যরত কর্মচারীদের এক অংশ অর্থ লোভে এই কাজে বিভিন্নভাবে পাচারকারীদের সাহায্য করে থাকে। নিরক্ষর বা উচ্চ শিক্ষিতদের অপেক্ষা পাচারকারীদের প্রথম পছন্দ মাঝারি-শিক্ষিতদের। যারা এই ব্যবসার শিকার হন তাদের ৯৫ শতাংশকেই চাকরী বা উপার্জনশীল কোনো লোভনীয় কাজের ধোকা দিয়ে সংগ্রহ করা হয়।

ভারত যেমন এই ঘৃণ্য ব্যবসায় ষড়যন্ত্র থেকে মুক্ত নয়, তদুপরি একটি বাড়তি লজ্জা আমাদের বরাতে আছে। তামিলনাড়ুসহ দক্ষিণ ভারতে দেবদাসী নামের সামাজিক প্রথার নামে ধর্মের দোহাই দিয়ে ধারাবাহিকভাবে নারীকে যৌন-নিগ্রহের শিকার করা হয়, তা থেকে সমাজকে এখনও মুক্ত করা গেল না। রাজস্থান এবং গুজরাটে ভিন্ন নামে নারীকে সামাজিক প্রথার আড়ালে যৌন নিগ্রহের শিকার হতে হয়। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের স্বরাষ্ট্র বিভাগের তথ্য অনুসারে ২০০৪ সালে নারী অপহরণের ঘটনা ১৫,৫৭৮, তার মধ্যে পশ্চিমবঙ্গে ১০১৮টি। লজ্জার বিষয়।

এই ভয়াবহ পরিসংখ্যানের মুখোমুখি দাঁড়িয়ে আমাদের মনে কি এই প্রশ্ন জাগে না — নারী নির্যাতন নামক সামাজিক ব্যাধির কি কোন অন্ত নেই? আমরা যারা সমাজের পরিশীলিত, বিচারবুদ্ধি সম্পন্ন, মননশীল, সংস্কৃতিমনা, সুরুচিসম্পন্ন মানুষ বলে পরিগণিত তাদের কি কোন সামাজিক দায়বদ্ধতা নেই চিরাচরিত সমাজলালিত ধারণাগুলিকে নাড়া দিয়ে, মানুষের মনের অন্ধকারকে দূর করে নারীদেরকে সমান আসনে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করার ক্ষেত্রে? সামাজিক সাম্য না হোক অন্তত: সামাজিক সুরক্ষা সুনিশ্চিত করা যায় নারীদের জন্য সংবলিত আইনি অধিকারগুলি বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে।

আইনি অধিকারঃ

পণপ্রথা নিবারণ আইন ১৯৬১ (Dowry Prohibition Act)

১৯৬১ সালে পণপ্রথা নিবারণ আইন বলবৎ হয় এবং ১৯৮৪ সালে সংশোধিত হয়। এর দ্বারা মহিলাদের উপর অত্যাচার করা দন্ডনীয় অপরাধ হিসাবে গ্রাহ্য হয়।

পণ দেওয়া নেওয়া এবং নেওয়ার জন্য -

- কমপক্ষে পাঁচ বছরের কারাবাস এবং কমপক্ষে ১৫০০০ টাকা জরিমানা
- যদি পণের টাকা ১৫০০০ টাকার বেশী হয় তাহলে জরিমানা হবে পণের টাকার সমপরিমান টাকা
- পণের দাবী করার জন্য কমপক্ষে ছ-মাসের কারাবাস এবং কোন বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে দু-বছর পর্যন্ত কারাবাসের মেয়াদ হতে পারে এবং জরিমানা ১০০০০ টাকা পর্যন্ত বাড়তে পারে।

পণের মৃত্যু ধারা ৩০৪বি, আই পি সি -

- বধূহত্যা আইনের আওতায় আসবে এই বিষয়গুলি বিবাহের সাত বছরের মধ্যে যদি বধূর মৃত্যু হয়, অগ্নিদগ্ধ হয়ে, শরীরে আঘাতজনিত ক্ষতের দ্বারা অথবা কোনো অস্বাভাবিক কারনে মৃত্যু হলে স্বামী, শ্বশুর এর জন্য দায়ী হবে।
- যদি দেখা যায় মৃত্যুর আগে পর্যন্ত বধূটি পণের দাবীতে এবং এই সম্পর্কিত বিষয়ের জন্য অত্যাচারিত হয়ে থাকেন স্বামী বা আত্মীয়স্বজন দ্বারা তাহলেও এই মৃত্যুকে পণের জন্য মৃত্যু বলা হবে।
- ভারতীয় দণ্ডবিধির ৪৯৮এ দ্বারা এই অত্যাচার দমন করার জন্য প্রয়োগ করা হয়। নির্যাতিতা বধূ বা তার আত্মীয়স্বজন বা কোন সমাজ সেবামূলক সংগঠন অভিযুক্ত অপরাধীর অভিযোগ থানায় নথিভুক্ত করতে পারবেন এই ধারা অনুযায়ী।

সামাজিক কুফল -

- ➢ মেয়েকে পণ্য হিসাবে গণ্য করা হয়
- ➢ ব্যক্তির লোভ ও চাহিদাতে ইন্ধন দেওয়া
- ➢ পণ দেওয়াকে বাধ্যতামূলক করে তোলা
- ➢ মেয়েটিকে মানসিক ও শারীরিক নির্যাতনের দিকে ঠেলে দেওয়া
- ➢ একটি নিষ্পাপ মেয়ের মৃত্যুর পথ প্রশস্থ করা

বাল্যবিবাহ নিরোধক আইন (The Child Marriage Restraint Act-1927)ঃ-

১৯২৭ সালের এই আইন ১৯৭৬ সালে সংশোধিত হয়। এই আইনে মেয়েদের বিয়ের ন্যূনতম বয়স ১৫ থেকে বাড়িয়ে ১৮ করা হয় এবং ছেলেদের ১৮ থেকে ২১ বছর। এই নির্দিষ্ট বয়সে পৌঁছানোর আগে ছেলে ও মেয়ের বিয়েতে কেউ সম্মতি দিলে তাদের জেল বা জরিমানা হতে পারে বা একসঙ্গে দুটোই হতে পারে।

সামাজিক প্রভাবঃ-

- স্বাস্থ্যের পক্ষে হানিকারক
- HIV , রক্তাল্পতা ও বিভিন্ন ধরণের মেয়েলি রোগ বা সমস্যার সম্ভাবনা
- কম বয়সে গর্ভধারণের ফলে অপুষ্ট শিশুর জন্ম, এমনকি শিশু মৃত্যু / প্রসূতির মৃত্যুও হতে পারে।
- মেয়েদের শিক্ষাগত সুযোগ এবং সামাজিক বিকাশ ব্যাহত হয়

মাতৃগর্ভে ভ্রূণের লিঙ্গ নির্ধারণ নিবারণ আইন [The Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation & Prevention of Misuse) Act – 1994] ঃ-

পুত্রসন্তান পাওয়ার আকাঙ্খা আজ একবিংশ শতাব্দীর মানবসমাজেও প্রবল। তাই গর্ভের ভূণের লিঙ্গা নির্ধারণ করে অনাকাঙ্খিত কন্যাসন্তানটিকে অকালে ঝরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়। ইহা আইনসম্মত নয়।

কোন ল্যাবরেটরী, হাসপাতাল, ক্লিনিক অথবা কোন চিকিৎসক লিঙ্গা নির্ধারণের জন্য কোন মহিলার উপর এই পরীক্ষা করতে পারবে না। এমনকি এই পরীক্ষার জন্য কোন অন্তঃসত্তা মহিলাকে তার স্বামী বা কোন ব্যাক্তি বাধ্য করতে পারবেন না। যদি করেন তাহলে তিনি আইন অনুযায়ী দোষী সাব্যস্ত হবেন এবং শাস্তি পাবেন।

তবে ১৯৭১ সালে The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act অনুসারে সুশিক্ষিত পেশাদারদের দ্বারা মানবিক কারণে ও চিকিৎসাগত কারণে গর্ভপাত করাকে আইনসঙ্গাত বলা হয়।

গর্ভপাত আইনসম্মত যখন -

- গর্ভের কারণে মায়ের জীবন আশঙ্কাজনক হয়।
- ধর্ষনের ফলে যে গর্ভ হয়ে থাকে।
- যদি গর্ভের শিশু বিকলাঙ্গা হবার আশঙ্খা থাকে।

গর্ভপাত করা যাবে -

- অন্তঃসত্তা হবার ১২ সপ্তাহের মধ্যে।
- ২০ সপ্তাহের পর কখনই করা যাবে না।
- ১২ সপ্তাহের পর করা যাবে তখনই যদি চিকিৎসক পরামর্শ দেন।

সামাজিক প্রভাবঃ-

- মহিলার স্বাস্থ্যের পক্ষে ক্ষতিকারক
- মেয়েদের সংখ্যা কমে যাওয়ার ফলে সামাজিক ভারসাম্য বিঘ্নিত হয় এবং নানারকম অপরাধমূলক ঘটনার সৃষ্টি হয়
- নানারকম সামাজিক সমস্যা যেমন - পণপ্রথা, বাল্যবিবাহ, ধর্ষণ, বধূ বিক্রি প্রভৃতির সৃষ্টি হয়।

নারী পাচার নিবারণী আইন, ১৯৫৬ (The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act)ঃ-

এই আইন অনুযায়ী (সংশোধিত ১৯৮৬) মহিলা ও পুরুষদের উপর হওয়া যৌন শোষণ একটি দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ হিসাবে গ্রাহ্য হয়। এছাড়া গণিকাবৃত্তি, গণিকালয় পরিচালনা, তাতে সহায়তা বা বাধ্য করা, গণিকাবৃত্তির জন্য দালালী করা এবং সেই উদ্দেশ্যে নারী ক্রয়, বিক্রয় বা ভাড়া দেওয়া ইত্যাদি এটি অপরাধের পর্যায়ে পড়ে।

সামাজিক প্রভাব -

১) একটি মেয়ের স্বাভাবিক জীবন বিকাশের পথ রুদ্ধ করা হয়

২) মেয়েরা দৈহিক ও মানসিকভাবে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়

৩) সামাজিক গ্রহণযোগ্যতার অভাবে পতিতাবৃত্তি গ্রহণ করতে বাধ্য হয়

৪) অনভিপ্রেত যৌন সংযোগের ফলে নানারকম মারণ ব্যাধি যেমন AIDS/ STD তে আক্রান্ত হয়।

অন্যান্য অধিকার ঃ

সমাহারে বেতন আইন, ১৯৭৬ (The Equal Remuneration Act)ঃ-

এর দ্বারা নারী পুরুষ নির্বিশেষে সমান কাজে সমান মজুরী দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা হয়েছে। এরূপ ক্ষেত্রে নিয়োগকর্তা যদি কোন বৈষম্য করে তাহলে অভিযোগ জানাতে হবে শ্রম দপ্তরের অফিসার/ইনস্‌পেক্টর/শ্রমিক সংগঠন/NGO/সমাজকর্মী - এদের কাছে।

মাতৃত্বকালীন সুযোগসুবিধা আইন (The Maternity Benefit Act) ঃ-

প্রত্যেক মহিলা কর্মী যারা কারখানায়, খনিতে, বাগানে, দোকানে বা যেকোন সরকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত তাদের জন্য এই আইন কার্যকর। গর্ভপাত, চিকিৎসকের সাহায্যে সরকারী হাসপাতালে গিয়ে বাচ্চা নষ্ট করা, সন্তান না হওয়ার জন্য অপারেশন করানো ইত্যাদি ক্ষেত্রেও মহিলা কর্মীরা সবেতন ছুটি পাবেন। জন্মের আগে বা জন্মের পরে যদি সন্তান মারা যায় তাহলেও এই সুবিধা পাওয়া যায়।

হিন্দু উত্তরাধিকার আইন ১৯৫৬ (The Hindu Succession Act) ঃ-

এই আইন ২০০৫ সালের ৯ই সেপ্টেম্বর থেকে সংশোধিত হয়ে নিম্নলিখিত সুযোগ সুবিধাগুলি প্রদান করে

১) ছেলেদের মত মেয়েদেরও এজমালি সম্পত্তিতে সমান অধিকার থাকবে

২) বিবাহিত মেয়ে স্বামী পরিত্যক্তা বা বিচ্ছেদপ্রাপ্ত বা বিধবা হলেও বাবার বাড়ীতে থাকার অধিকার আছে

৩) স্ত্রী হিসাবে যৌথ পরিবারের সম্পত্তিতে মহিলার স্বামী এবং পুত্রের মত তারও একটি অংশ থাকবে।

৪) যৌথ পরিবারের সম্পত্তি সমানভাবে ছেলেমেয়েদের মধ্যে ভাগ হবে তখনও মায়ের সমান ভাগ পাবার অধিকার আছে।

৫) মা তার সম্পত্তি ইচ্ছামত বিক্রী, উইল বা দান করতে পারেন।

নারীদেহের অশালীন উপস্থাপন (প্রতিরোধ) আইন, ১৯৮৬ [Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act] ঃ-

এই আইন অনুযায়ী নারীদেহ বা তার কোন অংশ ছবি, বই, কাগজপত্র, সংবাদপত্র, সিনেমা লেখা, আঁকা ইত্যাদির মাধ্যমে অশালীন ও হীনভাবে দেখালে বা জনগণের নৈতিকতার উপর কোনভাবে প্রভাব বিস্তর করলে তা অশালীন উপস্থাপন বলে গণ্য হবে। অবশ্য জনস্বার্থে বিজ্ঞান, কলা, সাহিত্য, দেওয়াল চিত্র বা মন্দিরের গায়ে স্থাপত্য ইত্যাদিতে নারীদেহের উপস্থানের ক্ষেত্রে ব্যতিক্রমের ব্যবস্থা আছে।

বিশেষ বিবাহ আইন, ১৯৫১ (Special Marriage Act)ঃ-

এই আইন অনুসারে বিবাহ সম্পন্ন হলে স্বামী বা তার স্ত্রী বর্তমান থাকা অবস্থায় কোন স্ত্রীলোক বা ব্যক্তির সঙ্গে পুণরায় বিবাহ সম্পন্ন হলে ভারতীয় দন্ডবিধির ৪৯৪ ও ৪৯৫ নং ধারা অনুযায়ী পুনরায় বিবাহ একটি শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ হিসাবে গণ্য হয়।

তপশীলী জাতি বা তপশিলী উপজাতি (নিষ্ঠুরতা নিবারণ) সংক্রান্ত আইন, ১৯৮৯ঃ-

তপশীলী জাতি ও উপজাতিভুক্ত নয় এমন ব্যক্তি এই শ্রেণীভুক্ত কোন পুরুষ বা মহিলার উপর কোনোরকম অত্যাচার করলে তা আইনের ৩৩নং ধারা অনুযায়ী শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ।

এছাড়াও মেয়েদের অধিকার সুরক্ষিত করার জন্য ভারতীয় সংবিধানের ১৪, ১৫, ১৫(গ), ৫১(ক) (গ), ৪২, ৪৪, ৩৯(খ), ৪৫ ও ৪৭ ধারায় বিশেষ সুবিধার উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। রাষ্ট্রে পরিচালনার নির্দেশাত্মক নীতিতেও নারী-পুরুষ সমানাধিকারের কথা উল্লিখিত হয়েছে। বিভিন্ন পঞ্চবার্ষিকী পরিকল্পনা এবং শিক্ষামূলক ও অর্থনৈতিক প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে এই অধিকারগুলির বাস্তবায়ণের চেষ্টা করা হচ্ছে।

আন্তর্জার্তিক ক্ষেত্রে Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959, Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, CEDAW 1992 ইত্যাদি মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত ঘোষণায় বৈষম্য গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় বলে জোর দেওয়া হয়েছে এবং ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে নারীপুরুষ নির্বিশেষে প্রত্যেকেই সকল প্রকার অধিকার ও স্বাধীনতা ভোগের অধিকারী।

Legal Aid Service (আইনী সহায়তা প্রদান)

প্রতি বছর ৯ই নভেম্বর এই দিনটি আইনী সহায়তা দিবস হিসাবে পালন করা হয়। আইনী সহায়তার অর্থ হল আর্থিক বা অন্যান্য দিক থেকে অক্ষম কোন নাগরিক যাতে বিচার পাবার সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত না হয় তার জন্য বিনামূল্যে আইনী সাহায্যের ব্যবস্থা।

কারা সাহায্য পেতে পারে -

- তপশিলী জাতি ও উপজাতি শ্রেণীভূক্ত যে কোন ব্যক্তি
- মহিলা ও শিশু
- মানসিকভাবে অসুস্থ বা অন্য কোনভাবে অসমর্থ ব্যক্তি
- প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয় যেমন খরা, বন্যা, ভূমিকম্প, দাঙ্গা বা শিল্পে বিপর্যয়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত শ্রমিক।
- জেলে বন্দী শ্রমিক

আইনী সহায়তা প্রদান করা হয় নিম্নলিখিত ক্ষেত্রে -

- কোন ব্যক্তি কোর্টে মামলা করলে আইনের সাহায্য পেতে পারে
- সরকারী খরচে অ্যাডভোকেটকে খরচ প্রদান
- মকদ্দমা সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য বিষয়ে খরচ
- আদালতের কোন রায়, আদেশ, সাক্ষীর বয়ান বা দলিলের প্রত্যয়িত নকল নেওয়ার খরচ

কোথায় আবেদন করবেন -

- প্রত্যেক রাজ্যে এবং জেলায় আইনসেবা কর্তৃপক্ষ গঠিত হয়েছে
- জেলা জজ পর্যায়ের প্রশাসক, যিনি রাজ্যে আইনী সহায়তা প্রদান কর্তৃপক্ষের সদস্য সম্পাদক
- পশ্চিমবঙ্গ মহিলা কমিশনে প্রাক আইনী পরামর্শদাতাদের কাছে এই আবেদনের ফর্ম পাওয়া যায়।

আপনার পদক্ষেপঃ-

এই আইনগুলি নীতি নির্দেশমূলক গতিবিধি ও ক্ষমতায়ণের পথ সুগম করে কিন্তু কার্যে পরিণত ও ফলপ্রসূ হওয়ার আগে শিক্ষকদের ছাত্রছাত্রীদের এবং সমাজের সকল মানুষকে এই আইন ও নীতিগুলি মেনে চলার জন্য সচেতন করতে প্রয়াসী হতে হবে। সমস্ত আইন, নীতি ও পরিকল্পনাসমূহ কর্মক্ষেত্রে প্রয়োজনবোধে আলোচনার মাধ্যমে সকলকে অবহিত করতে হবে। বিশেষ করে মায়েদের যাদেরকে আমরা মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের মাধ্যমে সংগঠিত রূপে বিদ্যালয়ের আঙ্গিনায় আনতে সক্ষম হয়েছি তাদেরকেও কর্মশালার মাধ্যমে আলোকিত করতে পারি।

নারীশিক্ষার সেকাল-একাল

প্রাচীন ভারতীয় সমাজে উপনিষদের যুগে বহু মহীয়সী নারীর কীর্তির কথা জানা আছে। এ বিষয়ে গার্গী, মৈত্রেয়ী, খনা, লীলাবতীর নাম উল্লেখ্য। দশম শতাব্দী থেকে উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগ পর্যন্ত ভারতে নারী শিক্ষার কালকে অন্ধকার যুগ বলা হয়। উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথমভাগে মিশনারীদের প্রচেষ্টায় ভারতে নারীশিক্ষার নামেমাত্র পুরনবুজ্জীবন ঘটে। উইলিয়াম কেরী এবং রেভারেণ্ড লং-এর নাম কৃতজ্ঞতার সঙ্গে স্মরণ করা যায়। উনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথম অর্ধে, নারীশিক্ষার বিস্তারের ব্যাপারে সরকারী উৎসাহ কিছুই ছিলনা। তাছাড়াও রক্ষণশীল হিন্দু মুসলমান উভয় সম্প্রদায়ই নারী শিক্ষার বিরোধী ছিলেন।

স্বাধীনতার পূর্বে বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের একক প্রচেষ্টাতে নারী শিক্ষার প্রসারে সরকারী উদ্যোগে বালিকাদের জন্য বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করা হয়। বিংশ-শতাব্দীতে নারীশিক্ষার সংখ্যাগত ও গুণগত দিক থেকে অনেক উন্নতি হলেও তা যথেষ্ট ছিল না, এমনকি মহর্ষি লর্ডের প্রচেষ্টায় ১৯১৫ সালে মহিলাদের জন্য একটি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থাপিত (এস.এন.ডি.এন) হয়েছিল। কিছু সামাজিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীরও পরিবর্তন হয়েছিল।

স্বাধীনতার পরবর্তীকালে নারী শিক্ষা — ভারতীয় শিক্ষিত সমাজ নারী শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে এই অসম অবস্থা সম্পর্কে ওয়াকিবহাল ছিলেন। ভারতীয় সংবিধানে নারীর সমানাধিকারের কথা জোর দিয়ে বলা হয়েছে।

শ্রীমতি দুর্গাবাই কমিটি - ১৯৫৮ সালে জাতীয় নারী শিক্ষা কমিটি গঠন করার নেতৃত্বে ছিলেন শ্রীমতি দুর্গাবাই দেশমুখ। এই কমিটির সুপারিশ অনুযায়ী জাতীয় নারীশিক্ষা সংসদ (National Council of Women Education) স্থাপিত হয়। এই সংসদ ভারত সরকারকে পরামর্শ দিয়ে থাকে।

শ্রীমতি হংস মেহতা কমিটি - ১৯৬২ সালে জাতীয় নারী শিক্ষা সংসদ শ্রীমতি হংসমেহতার নেতৃত্ব এই কমিটি গঠন করেন। এই কমিটি বহু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সুপারিশ করেন - এর মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল (১) ছেলেমেয়েদের একই পাঠ্যক্রম হবে (২) মেয়েদের উপযোগী বিভিন্ন বিষয়কে পাঠ্যক্রমে অন্তর্ভূক্ত করতে হবে। (৩) মেয়েদের উপযোগী বৃত্তি শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে। (৪) অধিক সংখ্যায় মহিলা শিক্ষক নিয়োগ করতে হবে।

শ্রী ভক্তবৎসলম্ কমিটি - জাতীয় নারী শিক্ষাসংসদ সারা দেশে নারীশিক্ষার প্রসার কিভাবে ঘটানো যায় তার পর্যালোচনার জন্য ১৯৬৩ সালে মাদ্রাজের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী শ্রী ভক্তবৎসলমের নেতৃত্বে একটি কমিটি গঠন করেছেন। এই কমিটি অনেক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সুপারিশ করেছেন যার মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল -

(১) মেয়েদের জন্য যথেষ্ট পরিমাণ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করতে হবে।

(২) মাধ্যমিক পর্যন্ত মেয়েদের শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ অবৈতনিক করতে হবে।

(৩) বিদ্যালয় যাতায়াত বিনাভাড়ায় করতে হবে।

(৪) দুপুরের আহার সরবরাহ করতে হবে ইত্যাদি।

ভারতীয় শিক্ষা কমিশন (১৯৬৪ — ৬৬)ঃ

শিক্ষা কমিশন ছেলে ও মেয়েদের শিক্ষার হারের পার্থক্য কমিয়ে আনার জন্য বিশেষ কর্মসূচী গ্রহণ করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেন। কমিশন বলেন অন্তত: কয়েক বছরের জন্য হলেও মেয়েদের শিক্ষার ব্যাপারে অতিরিক্ত সুযোগ সুবিধা দিতে হবে।

১৯৬৮ সালের জাতীয় শিক্ষা নীতি (National Policy of Education) - এই জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতেতে বলা হয় - **"The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation."**

১৯৮৬ সালের জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতি - (NPE- 1986) রাজীবগান্ধী প্রবর্তিত জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতেতে সমস্ত দিকে গুরুত্ব দিয়ে নারীশিক্ষার অগ্রগতিকে দ্রুততর করার অঙ্গীকার করা হয়েছে। এই নীতিতে বলা হয়েছে শিক্ষাকে নারীদের সামাজিক মর্যাদা বৃদ্ধির উপায় হিসাবে ব্যবহার করা হবে। এই শিক্ষানীতিতে স্পষ্টভাবে বলা হয়েছে - **"In order to neutralize the accumulated distortion of the past, there will be a well – conceived edge in favour of women."**

এর পরবর্তীকালে সরকার দ্বারা গৃহীত বিভিন্ন শিক্ষা পরিকল্পনা এবং একবিংশ শতকে সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানে শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে নারীদের অবস্থানের আমূল পরিবর্তন ঘটিয়েছে। প্রতি দশবছর অন্তর **Census Report** সেই তথ্যকেই তুলে ধরে -

নারীশিক্ষার হার এবং সাক্ষরতা হারের বৈষম্য ঃ ১৯৬১ — ২০০১

সাল	বয়সের শ্রেণীবিভাগ	সাক্ষরতার হার (পুং)	সাক্ষরতার হার (স্ত্রী)	শতকরা হারে পার্থক্য
১৯৬১	৫ এবং অধিক	৪০.৪০	১৫.৩৪	২৫.০৬
১৯৭১	৫ এবং অধিক	৪৫.৯৫	২১.৯৭	২৩.৯৮
১৯৮১*	৫ এবং অধিক	৫৩.৪৫	২৮.৪৬	২৪.৯৯
১৯৮১*	৭ এবং অধিক	৫৬.৩৭	২৯.৭৫	২৬.৬২
১৯৯১**	৭ এবং অধিক	৬৪.১৩	৩৯.২৯	২৪.৮৪
২০০১***	৭ এবং অধিক	৭৫.৮৫	৫৪.১৬	২১.৭০

* আসাম ব্যতীত

** জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর ব্যতীত

*** আদমসুমারী ২০০১

১৯৬১ থেকে ২০০১-এ নারীর শিক্ষাগ্রহণের হার যেমন সর্বভারতীয় স্তরে বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে সেই সঙ্গে নারী-পুরুষ সাক্ষরতা হারের পার্থক্যও কিছুটা কমেছে।

- ১৯৬১ সালে নারী শিক্ষার হার ছিল ১৫.৩৪ শতাংশ যেখানে পুরুষেরা ছিল অনেকটা এগিয়ে (৪০.৪০ শতাংশ)
- আরও তিন দশক পরে ১৯৮১তে নারী সাক্ষরতার হার প্রায় দ্বিগুণ হয় (২৯.৭৫ শতাংশ) তবে নারী-পুরুষ বৈষম্য কিন্তু খুব একটা আশাজনক জায়গায় পৌঁছায় না (২৬.৬২ শতাংশ)
- ২০০১ সালের রিপোর্ট আমাদের শিক্ষার ইতিহাসে খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কারণ স্বাধীনোত্তরকালে সর্বপ্রথম নিরক্ষর জনসংখ্যার হার সামগ্রিক সংখ্যার বিচারে কমে এবং ৩২৮.১৬ লাখ থেকে কমে তা দাঁড়ায় ২৯৬.২০ লাখে। ছেলেদের সাক্ষরতার হার ৪০.৪০ শতাংশ (১৯৬১) থেকে বেড়ে যায় ৭৫.৮৫ শতাংশতে এবং মহিলাদের ক্ষেত্রে এই পরিবর্তন হয় ১৫.৩৪ শতাংশ (১৯৬১) থেকে ৫৪.১৬ শতাংশতে, প্রায় সাড়ে তিনগুণ।

- ছেলেমেয়েদের শিক্ষার হারের তুললামূলক বিশ্লেষেণ করলে দেখা যায় ১৯৬১তে ইহা ছিল ২৫.০৬ শতাংশতে এবং ২০০১-এ তা কমে দাঁড়ায় ২১.৭০ শতাংশতে। অতএব এই বৈষম্য কমানোর জন্য আমাদের আরও বেশী সার্বিক প্রচেষ্টা প্রয়োজন।

শহরের মেয়েরা গ্রামের মেয়েদের তুলনায় শিক্ষালাভের সুযোগ অনেক বেশী পায়। তফশিলী জাতি ও উপজাতিভুক্ত মেয়েরা শিক্ষার সুযোগ, সুবিধা সব থেকে কম পায়।

শহর-গ্রামাঞ্চলে সাক্ষরতা হারে পার্থক্য — ২০০১			
	মোট সংখ্যা	পুরুষ সাক্ষর	মহিলা সাক্ষর
মোট	৫৬০.৬৮ লক্ষ (৬৪.৮%)	৩৩৬.৫৩ লক্ষ (৭৫.৩%)	২২৪.১৫ লক্ষ (৫৩.৭%)
গ্রামাঞ্চল	৩৬১.৮৭ লক্ষ (৫৮.৭%)	২২৩.৫৫ লক্ষ (৭০.৭%)	১৩৮.৩২ লক্ষ (৪৬.১%)
শহরাঞ্চল	১৯৯.৮১ লক্ষ (৭৯.৯%)	১১৩.৯৮ লক্ষ (৮৬.৩%)	৮৫.৮৩ লক্ষ (৭২.৯%)
তপশিলী জাতি	৭৫.৩১ লক্ষ (৫৪.৬৯%)	৪৭.৪৩ লক্ষ (৬৬.৬৪%)	২৭.৮৮ লক্ষ (৪১.৯০%)
তপশিলী উপজাতি	৩২.৩৮ লক্ষ (৪৭.১০%)	২০.৫৬ লক্ষ (৫৯.১৭%)	১১.৮২ লক্ষ (৩৪.৭৬%)

- ২০০১ এর পরিসংখ্যা বলছে, গ্রামাঞ্চলে যেখানে ৪৬.১ শতাংশ মহিলা শিক্ষার আওতায় এসেছে শহরে সেই তুলনায় ৭২.৯ শতাংশ মেয়েরা শিক্ষার সুযোগ গ্রহণ করছে।
- তপশীলিজাতি উপজাতিদের ক্ষেত্রেও অঞ্চলভেদে এবং নারী-পুরুষভেদে পার্থক্য লক্ষ্য করা যায়।
- সাধারণতঃ গ্রামের মেয়েদের তুলনায় শহরে মেয়েদের সুযোগ-সুবিধা অনেক বেশী। আবার তপশিলী উপজাতি ভূক্ত মহিলাদের তুলনায় তপশিলী জাতিভূক্ত মেয়েরা অনগ্রসতার অন্ধকার থেকে দ্রুততরভাবে শিক্ষায় আলোকের দিকে এগিয়ে চলছে।

আন্তঃরাজ্য বৈষম্য ঃ-

১৯৮১ থেকে ২০০১ নারীদের সাক্ষরতা হারে কিরূপ পরিবর্তন ঘটেছে রাজ্যভিত্তিক তার একটি তালিকা পরিবেশিত হল।

	১৯৮১		১৯৯১		২০০১	
রাজ্য	মহিলা	স্থান	মহিলা	স্থান	মহিলা	স্থান
কেরালা	৭৫.৬৫	১	৮৬.১৭	১	৮৭.৮৬	১
গোয়া	৫৫.১৭	২	৬৭.০৯	২	৭৫.৫১	২
মহারাষ্ট্র	৪১.০১	৩	৫২.৩২	৩	৬৭.৫১	৪
তামিলনাড়ু	৪০.৪৩	৪	৫১.৩৩	৫	৬৪.৫৫	৫
পাঞ্জাব	৩৯.৭০	৫	৫০.৪১	৬	৬৩.৫৫	৬
গুজরাট	৩৮.৪৬	৬	৪৮.৬৪	৭	৫৮.৬০	৮
হিমাচল	৩৭.৭২	৭	৫২.১৩	৪	৬৮.০৮	৩
পশ্চিমবঙ্গ	৩৬.০৭	৮	৪৬.৫৬	৮	৬০.২২	৭
কর্ণাটক	৩৩.১৭	৯	৪৪.৩৪	৯	৫৭.৪৫	৯
হরিয়ানা	২৬.৯৩	১০	৪০.৪৭	১০	৫৬.৩১	১০
উড়িষ্যা	২৫.১৪	১১	৩৪.৬৮	১১	৫০.৯৭	১২
অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ	২৪.১৬	১২	৩২.৭২	১২	৫১.১৭	১১
মধ্যপ্রদেশ	১৯	১৩	২৮.৮৫	১৩	৫০.২৮	১৩
উত্তরপ্রদেশ	১৭.১৯	১৪	২৫.৩১	১৪	৪২.৯৮	১৫
বিহার	১৬.৫২	১৫	২২.৮৯	১৫	৩৬.৪৭	১৬
রাজস্থান	১৪	১৬	২০.৪৪	১৬	৪৪.৩৪	১৪

সূত্র ঃ সেনসা্স ১৯৮১, ১৯৯১, ২০০১

- কেরালা পরপর তিনটি সেনস্‌স অনুযায়ীই প্রথম স্থানে রয়েছে। ১৯৮১তে যেখানে এই হার ছিল ৭৫.৬৫ শতাংশ, ২০০১-এ তা দাঁড়ায় ৮৭.৮৬ শতাংশতে।
- প্রথম ১০ এর মধ্যে স্থানাধিকারী রাজ্যগুলির নারীসাক্ষরতার হার ৫০ শতাংশের অধিক এবং লিঙ্গ অনুপাতও ৯০০-এর অধিক।
- কেবলমাত্র পাঞ্জাব ও হরিয়ানা এই রাজ্য দুটিতে মেয়েদের সংখ্যা ১০০০ জন পুরুষের অনুপাতে ৯০০-এর কম কিন্তু নারী সাক্ষরতার হার তুলনামূলকভাবে উৎসাহজনক।
- উত্তরপ্রদেশ, বিহার, রাজস্থান এই রাজ্যগুলিতে ১৯৮১-র তুলনায় নারী 'সাক্ষরতার হার ২০০১-এ প্রায় আড়াইগুণ বেড়েছে কিন্তু সার্বিকভাবে তা এখনও ৫০ শতাংশে পৌঁছাতে পারেনি।

নারী সাক্ষরতায় পশ্চিমবঙ্গ প্রথম দশের মধ্যে স্থান অধিকার করলেও ৬০.২২ শতাংশটিকে আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে। উচ্চপ্রাথমিক স্তরে মেয়েদের ভর্তি, চারবছরে অষ্টম শ্রেণীর শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণকরণ, স্কুল ছুট্ এবং পুনরাবৃত্তির পরিসংখ্যানকে **Cohort Study 2004** এর মাধ্যমে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সর্বশিক্ষা মিশন তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করেছে। এই সমীক্ষায় পশ্চিমবঙ্গের ২০টি জেলার মোট ৮০ শতাংশ উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় থেকে নথি সংগ্রহ করা হয়েছে। এর থেকে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তরে মেয়েদের শিক্ষাগত অবস্থানের একটা সম্পূর্ণ চিত্র পাওয়া যায়।

কোহর্ট সমীক্ষা ২০০৪ — উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তর (পশ্চিমবঙ্গ)

জেলা	স্কুল ছুট্ (%) ছেলে	স্কুল ছুট্ (%) মেয়ে	সি.আর.এফ(%) ছেলে	সি.আর.এফ(%) মেয়ে	পুনরাবৃত্তি(%) ছেলে	পুনরাবৃত্তি(%) মেয়ে
বাঁকুড়া	১৮.২৫	১৯.৩১	৪৫.১৫	৪৩.৪	৪৭.২	৪৮.৭৮
বীরভূম	৩২.০১	৩১.৭৭	৩৬.৩৮	৩৫.৭৩	৫২.২৮	৪৯.৯৭
কোচবিহার	৩১.৭২	৩৫.৪২	৩৩.০১	২৯.৫৩	৬১.৬২	৬৪.৪৮
মূর্শিদাবাদ	৩৩.৩৪	৩৪.১৬	৩২.৬৫	৩১.৫৩	৫২.৮৭	৫৫.১
দ:২৪ পরগণা	৩৬.৩৩	৩৩.৮৩	৩৩.৬৩	৩৩.৫৮	৪৯.১	৫২.০৯
দ: দিনাজপুর	২৯.০১	৩০	৪৬	৪৫.৬৯	৩৬.১৩	৩৫.৪৯
জলপাইগুড়ি	১৯.২৩	১৯.৯১	৩৪.২৯	৩১.৬৮	৬৬.৮৫	৭০.৬৮
মালদা	৩৪.৫৪	৩৪.৮৬	৩৬.১১	৩৬.০৪	৪৪.৬৮	৪৪.২১
পুরুলিয়া	৩৮.৫৫	৩৬.৮৭	৩৫.০৭	৩৩.৮৯	৪৪.১৩	৪৬.০৬
উ: দিনাজপুর	২৭.৩	২৭.০৫	৪০.৪১	৪১.৪৭	৪৪.৩৬	৪৪.৫২
বর্ধমান	৩২.৮	৩১.০২	৩৭.১	৩৮.৫৭	৪৭.৫	৪৭.৯২
দার্জিলিং	৪১.৬৪	৪২.২৮	৩৩.৪২	৩১	৪৫.৫৪	৪৮.২৮
হাওড়া	২৭.১৩	২৬.১৯	৩৩.৬২	৩৪.৯৫	৫৬.৫৫	৫৬.৬৯
হুগলী	৩৫.৩৮	৩১.৩১	৩৪.৯২	৩৫.৮	৫২.২৪	৫৬.৭২
কলকাতা	২৯.৩৪	২৭.৭৯	৪১.৩৫	৪০.৭৯	৩৩.৫৭	৩৭.৯২
নদীয়া	২৬.৩২	২৭.৮১	৪৭.৪৯	৪৪.৪৩	৪৩.৪৪	৪৮.৫৬
উ:২৪ পরগণা	৩০.৯৭	২৯.৭১	৩৮.৬৭	৩৬.৫	৪৯.১৫	৫৩.৫
প: মেদিনীপুর	৩৮.২৭	৩৮.০৮	৩৯.৭৬	৪১.১১	৪১.৯	৪১.৬৯
পূ: মেদিনীপুর	২৭.২৮	২৮.১৯	৪৩.২১	৪১.১১	৪১	৪৪.৭২
শিলিগুড়ি	১১.৩২	১২.২৮	৪৪.৪৩	৪০.৯	৫৭.৩৮	৬১.৩
মোট	**৩১.২২**	**৩০.৭৫**	**৩৭.৯**	**৩৭.৩১**	**৪৮.০৪**	**৫০.৩৩**

সূত্র : পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সর্বশিক্ষা মিশন

- পঞ্চম শ্রেণীতে ভর্তি হওয়া প্রতি ১০০টি মেয়ের মধ্যে ৩০.৭৫ জনই অষ্টম শ্রেণীর শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ হওয়ার পূর্বে স্কুলছুট হয়ে যায়।
- আরো বিস্ময়কর হল ১৪.২৮ শতাংশ মেয়েই পঞ্চম শ্রেণীতে স্কুলছুট হয়ে যায়।

- ৩৭.৩১ শতাংশ মেয়ে সাফল্যের সঙ্গে চার বছরে অষ্টম শ্রেণীর শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ করে। ছেলেদের (৩৭.৯ শতাংশ) থেকে মেয়েরা এই ব্যাপারে সামান্যই পিছিয়ে।
  কিন্তু ভাবুনতো ১০০টা মেয়ের মধ্যে মাত্র ৩৭ জন অষ্টম শ্রেণীর শিক্ষা পায় তাহলে বাকিরা যায় কোথায়?
- আবার ৫০.৩৩ শতাংশ মেয়ে চার বছরে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তরে শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ করতে পারে না। অকৃতকার্যতার দরুণ তারা একই ক্লাসে একাধিক বছর পড়ে।

মেয়েদের স্কুলছুটের হার ঃ শ্রেণী অনুযায়ী			
পঞ্চম	ষষ্ঠ	সপ্তম	অষ্টম
১৪.২৮ শতাংশ	৯.৫৫ শতাংশ	৫.৬৮ শতাংশ	১.২৮ শতাংশ

ভাবতে খুবই অবাক লাগছে যে, ৬—১৪ বছর বয়সী প্রতিটি শিশুর প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষাকে যেখানে মৌলিক অধিকার হিসাবে স্বীকৃত দেওয়া হয়েছে সেখানে পঞ্চম শ্রেণীতে ভর্তি হওয়া ৩০ শতাংশ মেয়ে এই শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা থেকে ছুট হয়ে যায়। বাকীদের মধ্যে সকলে সমান হারে প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীতে উত্তীর্ণ হতে পারে না। তবে কি গুণগত মানের দিক থেকে কি আমরা পিছিয়ে যাচ্ছি? মেয়েদের প্রতি আমাদের কি আরও বেশী নজর দেওয়া প্রয়োজন?

এই পরিসংখ্যানের চিত্রটিকে আমরা কি একটু বদলাতে পারি?

লিঙ্গ সমতার সূচক অনুযায়ী কিন্তু উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তরে মেয়েদের শিক্ষার এরূপ বেহাল অবস্থার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় না।

লিঙ্গ সমতার সূচক (জি.পি.আই)ঃ ভর্ত্তিকরণের ভিত্তিতে {ভারতবর্ষ}

সাল	১ম - ৫ম শ্রেণী	৬ষ্ঠ - ৮ম শ্রেণী	১ম - ৭ম/৮ম শ্রেণী
২০০৩—০৪	০.৯০	০.৮২	০.৮৮
২০০৪—০৫	০.৯১	০.৮৩	০.৮৯
২০০৫—০৬	০.৯২	০.৮৪	০.৯০

(সূত্র ঃ- Elementary Education in India, Analytical Report 2005-06 by Arun C. Meheta)

সর্বভারতীয় ভিত্তিতে প্রাথমিক স্তরে লিঙ্গ সমতার সূচক ক্রমাগতই উর্দ্ধগামী। ২০০৩—০৪ এ ০.৯০ থেকে ২০০৫—০৬ এ হয়েছে ০.৯২। কিন্তু উচ্চপ্রাথমিক স্তরে সেই সমাহার পরিলক্ষিত হয় না। ২০০৫—০৬ সালে ইহা ছিল ০.৮৪।

তুলনামূলক ভাবে পশ্চিমবঙ্গে প্রাথমিক (০.৯৮) এবং উচ্চপ্রাথমিক (০.৯৬) উভয় স্তরেই এই সূচকের মান অতন্ত্যই উল্লেখজনক কিন্তু একটা প্রশ্ন বারবারই জাগে —

- **এত মেয়ে বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষার আঙ্গিনায় আসছে কিন্তু তাঁরা সকলেই নুন্যতম প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা সফলতার সঙ্গে লাভ করতে পারছে না কেন?**
- **একটু ভেবে দেখুন কোন প্রতিবন্ধকতাগুলি এর জন্য দায়ী?**
- **মেয়েদের শিক্ষায় মা বাবার ভূমিকা কতটা?**
- **একজন শিক্ষকের দায়িত্ব কি বিদ্যালয়ে চার দেওয়ালের নির্দিষ্ট সময় সারণীর মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ?**

পঠন-পাঠন ব্যবস্থায় লিঙ্গসাম্য

বৃহত্তর পৃথিবীতে লিঙ্গবৈষম্য যে ভয়াবহ পরিসংখ্যান পৌঁছেছে, তার বীজ সুপ্ত রয়েছে শিশুমনের মধ্যেই যা যথাযথভাবে উৎপাটিত না হলে ভবিষ্যতে বিষবৃক্ষে পরিণত হতে পারে। বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাও এই বৈষম্য নিরপেক্ষ নয়। বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষার ধারাবাহিকতা বজায় রাখার মহান দায়িত্ব যাদের স্কন্ধে অর্পণ করা হয়েছে - সেই শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকামণ্ডলীকেই অগ্রণী হতে হবে সাম্যের বাতাবরণ স্থাপনের ক্ষেত্রে।

শ্রেণিকক্ষ ও শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকার প্রত্যাশিত আচরণসমূহ :

১) শ্রেণিকক্ষে ছেলে ও মেয়েদের আলাদা বসাবেন না।

২) প্রত্যেক দলে ছেলে ও মেয়েদের মধ্য থেকে দুজন করে মনিটর নিয়োগ করুন।

৩) দলগত কার্যক্রম, খেলাধূলা, সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান এবং পূজার সময় ছেলেমেয়ে মিশিয়ে দল তৈরী করুন।

৪) বিদ্যালয়ে স্পোর্টসের অনুষ্ঠানে মেয়েদেরকেও মনিটর হিসাবে নিয়োগ করুন।

৫) ১৯৮৬ সালের জাতীয় শিক্ষানীতির বাস্তবায়ণে শিক্ষকের নিশ্চয়ই একটা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রয়ে গেছে। আপনার শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে একটি আনন্দদায়ক সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসাবে তুলে ধরার জন্য বিদ্যালয়ের মেয়েদের জন্য কি কোন সহায়ক সরঞ্জামের ব্যবস্থা করেছেন? মেয়েরা কি বিদ্যালয়ে ফুটবল খেলে? স্কিপিং নিয়ে দৌড়ায়? ফ্লাইং ডিস্ক ছোঁড়াছুঁড়ি করে? এগুলির প্রয়োজনীয়তা অনুভব করুন।

৬) লেখাপড়া সম্পর্কে প্রচলিত ধারণা অঙ্ক, বিজ্ঞান, ও প্রযুক্তি মূলতঃ ছেলেদের পড়াবার বিষয়, মেয়েরা শিক্ষা করবে কলাবিদ্যা ও গার্হস্থ্যবিজ্ঞান — এইসব ধারণার বদল হওয়ার দরকার। প্রযুক্তিগত ও বিজ্ঞান শিক্ষায় মেয়েরা যে আজ যথেষ্ট অগ্রণী ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেছে বাস্তব উদাহরণ দিয়ে মেয়েদের উৎসাহিত করা দরকার।

৭) ছেলে ও মেয়েদের সমান হারে প্রশ্ন করুন।

৮) মেয়েদের কঠিন প্রশ্ন করতে দ্বিধাবোধ করবেন না।

৯) মেয়েদের প্রতি কোন আচরণ বা মন্তব্য এমন না হয় যাতে তারা হীনমন্যতাবোধে ভোগে।

১০) ছাত্রীদের সেইভাবে তৈরী করুন যাতে তারা নেতৃত্ব দেওয়ার ক্ষমতা ও সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার ক্ষমতা অর্জন করে এবং ছেলে মেয়ে দুপক্ষই যাতে পরস্পরকে সমানভাবে গ্রহণ করতে পারে।

১১) আগ বাড়িয়ে মেয়েদের প্রতি বিশেষ যত্ন বা পক্ষপাতিত্ব প্রকাশ না করাই ভাল। এতে মেয়েদের প্রতি ছেলেদের বিতৃষ্ণার মনোভাব জন্মাতে পারে।

১২) 'সামাজিক ভূমিকা' পাল্টাপাল্টির চেষ্টা করুন যাতে সামাজিকীকরণের ফলে আয়ত্তীকৃত অভ্যাসগুলি থেকে তারা বেরিয়ে আসতে পারে এবং সামাজিক অগ্রগতিতে যে উভয়ের ভূমিকাই সমান গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই বোধ জাগ্রত হয়। এর ফলে পরস্পরের প্রতি মর্যাদাবোধ এবং পারস্পরিক নির্ভরশীলতা বৃদ্ধি পাবে।

১৩) সামাজিক কুপ্রথা যেমন — বাল্যবিবাহ, কন্যাভ্রূণ হত্যা, পণপ্রথা, নারী নিপীড়ন, ডাইনি সন্দেহে হত্যা ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলি সম্বন্ধে উভয়ের মতামত গ্রহণ করুন। তাদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীকে যুক্তিভিত্তিক ও বাস্তবসম্মত করে তুলুন।

১৪) সামাজিক প্রতিবন্ধকতাগুলি কাটিয়ে মেয়েদের বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষার আওতায় আনার জন্য কি কি পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা যায় — যৌথভাবে আলোচনা করুন।

পাঠক্রমের আদান প্রদান ও শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকার ভূমিকা :

প্রতিটি রাজ্যে কেন্দ্রীয়ভাবে ও জাতীয় সংস্থাগুলির সাহায্যে পাঠ্যপুস্তক এবং শিক্ষার অন্যান্য উপকরণগুলি তৈরী করা হয়। পাঠ্যপুস্তকে বিষয়বস্তু নির্ধারণে, উদাহরণস্বরূপ বিশ্লেষণে অনেক সময় অনিচ্ছাকৃত পক্ষপাতিত্ব লক্ষ্য করা যায়। তাই পাঠক্রমের আদানপ্রদানে শিক্ষক শিক্ষিকারা নজর রাখবেন —

১) শিক্ষাপ্রদানকালে ও আলোচনার সময় ব্যবহৃত উদাহরণগুলি কি বেশীরভাগই পুরুষকেন্দ্রিক ?

২) আপনার লেখা বাক্যে কি মেয়েদের তুলনায় ছেলেদের নাম বেশী থাকে ?

৩) নিয়মশৃঙ্খলা ও শাস্তি দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে কি ছেলে ও মেয়েদের মধ্যে পার্থক্য করেন ?

৪) আপনি কি সঠিক উত্তর প্রদানের জন্য ছেলে ও মেয়েদের আলাদাভাবে পুরস্কৃত করেন ?

কয়েকটি প্রস্তাব :

☞ ছাত্রছাত্রীদের এমন ছবি দেখানো উচিত, যেখানে মেয়েরা শুধু মা নন, তারা হতে পারেন — শিক্ষিকা, ডাক্তার, অধ্যাপিকা, ইঞ্জিনিয়ার, মহাকাশযাত্রী, প্রশাসক, রাজনীতিবিদ, জাহাজের ক্যাপ্টেন, পাইলট, সমাজসংস্কারক বা সমাজসেবী, পুলিশ অফিসার, স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামী বা পশুপ্রেমী হতে পারেন। এই ধরণের যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন মেয়েদের ছবি বা পোস্টারে ক্লাসঘরের দেওয়াল এমনকি সহায়ক বইগুলিও ভরিয়ে দেওয়া দরকার।

☞ শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকারা ছবির সাহায্যে দেখাবেন ও বোঝাবেন কিভাবে মেয়েরা পুরুষদের সঙ্গে কাঁধে কাঁধ মিলিয়ে খাটছেন, চিকিৎসাকেন্দ্রে কিভাবে পাশাপাশি কাজ করছেন, বড় বড় যন্ত্রপাতি চালাচ্ছেন। এর সাথে দেখানো যেতে পারে আনাজ কাটা, জামাকাপড় কাচা, জল তোলা, উনুন ধরানোর কাঠ কাটা — এসব বাড়ীর কাজে কিভাবে পুরষেরা মেয়েদের সঙ্গে সমানভাবে অংশগ্রহন করতে পারেন।

☞ শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকারা মাঝে মধ্যেই লেখিকা, শিল্পী বা অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রের প্রতিভাময়ী নারীদের স্কুলে আমন্ত্রণ জানাতে পারেন যাতে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা তাদের দৃষ্টান্তের মাধ্যমে উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়।

☞ পাঠ্যপুস্তকের কোন পৃষ্ঠায় পক্ষপাতদোষে দুষ্ট কোন উল্লেখ থাকলে শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকারা তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন করতে পারেন। অঙ্ক, প্রকৃতি বিজ্ঞান, ভাষা অথবা যেকোন বিষয় পড়াবার সময় এমন উদাহরণ ব্যবহার করতে হবে যেখানে জীবনের প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রে নারী ও পুরষের ভূমিকা যে সমান গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তা বোঝা যায়।

পাঠ্যপুস্তক বিশ্লেষণ :

ষষ্ঠ থেকে অষ্টম শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত ইতিহাস পাঠ্যপুস্তকে (পশ্চিমবঙ্গ মধ্য শিক্ষা পর্যদ) বিভিন্ন সভ্যতায়/যুগে নারীদের সামাজিক অবস্থান কিরূপ ছিল সে সম্বন্ধে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা ধারণালাভ করতে পারে। পাঠ্যবইয়ের কিছু বিশেষ অংশ উল্লিখিত হল —

ষষ্ঠ শ্রেণি : (প্রাচীন যুগ)

❖ ঋকবেদের যুগে পরিবার ছিল পুরুষপ্রধান কিন্তু মেয়েদের স্বাধীনতা ছিল। অপালা, মৈত্রেয়ীর মত অসাধারণ মহিলাদের সম্বন্ধে জানা যায়।

❖ গুপ্তযুগে দেখা যায় রাজকন্যাদের বিবাহ করা হত রাজ্যকে শক্তিশালী করার জন্য।

❖ কুষাণযুগে গান্ধার শিল্পে দেখা যায় নারী মূর্তির প্রাধান্য।

❖ আবার ব্যবিলনীয় সভ্যতায় হামুরাবি বিধি অনুযায়ী ঋণগ্রহীতা টাকা শোধে অপারগ হলে স্ত্রীকে দাসশ্রমিক রূপে ব্যবহার করা হত।

সপ্তম শ্রেণি : (মধ্য যুগ)

❖ জার্মান সমাজে স্ত্রীলোকদের মর্যাদা ছিল।

❖ আরব সমাজে বহুবিবাহ প্রথা প্রচলিত ছিল এবং নারীদের কোন মর্যাদা ছিল না।

❖ সামন্ত যুগে নারীর প্রতি ভদ্র ব্যবহার ও তার মর্যাদা রক্ষিত হত ; এ বিষয়ে একদল চারণ কবি গানও রচনা করতেন। কিন্তু সার্ফদের সামাজিক অবস্থা নিম্নতম ছিল এবং স্ত্রীরা বেগার শ্রম দিত।

❖ পাল-সেন যুগে মেয়েরা শ্রদ্ধার পাত্রী হলেও প্রকৃত স্বাধীনতা পেতেন না।

❖ সুলতানী যুগে একমাত্র মহিলা রাজিয়া সুলতানা রাজসিংহাসনে অভিসিক্ত হয়েছিলেন কিন্তু তার সম্বন্ধে পাঠ্যপুস্তকে অতিরিক্ত কিছুই বলা হয়নি। তাছাড়া এই যুগে সতীদাহ, বাল্য বিবাহ ইত্যাদি কুপ্রথাগুলি বলবৎ ছিল।

অষ্টম শ্রেণি :

❖ ষোড়শ শতকের মোঘল যুগে এবং অষ্টাদশ শতকেও সামাজিক কুপ্রথাগুলি প্রচিলিত ছিল।

❖ উনবিংশ শতকে ভারতীয় সমাজ সংস্কারকদের (বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়) সামাজিক প্রয়াস লক্ষিত হয়।

❖ বিয়াল্লিশের অগস্ট আন্দোলনে মহীয়সী নারী মাতঙ্গিনী হাজরার নির্ভীকতা সম্বন্ধে জানা যায়।

বয়:সন্ধিকালীন শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম ও শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকার ভূমিকা :

পঞ্চম থেকে অষ্টম শ্রেণিতে পাঠরত ছাত্রছাত্রীরা যেহেতু একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বয়সকালের অন্তর্ভুক্ত (১১-১৪ বছর) তাই তাদের প্রতি বিশেষ যত্নবান হওয়া প্রয়োজন। বয়:সন্ধিকালীন দৈহিক ও মানসিক পরিবর্তনগুলির কথা মাথায় রেখে বিশেষ স্পর্শকাতর হওয়া উচিত।

Adolescent Education (AE) কার্যক্রমের সার্থক রূপায়ণের দায়িত্ব শিক্ষকের। পাঠক্রম অনুযায়ী এই বিষয়গুলি সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা সময় বিদ্যালয় পরিবেশকেও সহায়ক করে তুলতে হবে যাতে আলোচনায় অংশগ্রহণকারীরা সুস্থভাবে এবং সদর্থক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী নিয়ে প্রত্যেকটি বিষয় সম্বন্ধে তাদের সঠিক মনোভাব গড়ে তুলতে পারে। একজন শিক্ষকই পারেন বয়:সন্ধিকালীন কিশোর কিশোরীদের অবাঞ্ছিত যৌন নিগ্রহ এবং অপব্যবহারের হাত থেকে রক্ষা করতে কেবলমাত্র সঠিক তথ্য সরবরাহ এবং সচেতনতার মাধ্যমে।

ছাত্রছাত্রীদের প্রতি আপনার আচরণসমূহ :

☞ আপনি তাদের স্নেহ করেন এবং গুরুত্ব দেন — এই বোধ জাগ্রত করুন।

☞ জীবনের বিভিন্ন দিক সম্পর্কে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের অবহিত করুন।

☞ চিকিৎসাগতভাবে সঠিক তথ্য সরবরাহ করুন।

☞ **AE** সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন বিষয়গুলি পোস্টারের মাধ্যমে তাদের সামনে তুলে ধরুন।

- শ্রেণীকক্ষের পরিবেশ এমনভাবে গড়ে তুলতে হবে যাতে করে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা স্বচ্ছন্দ বোধ করে। 'প্রশ্ন বাক্স' (**Question Box**) ব্যবহার করা যেতে পারে যাতে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা তাদের কৌতূহল নিবারণের জন্য বিভিন্ন প্রশ্ন নাম পরিচয় গোপন রেখে **teacher** এর সামনে তুলে ধরতে পারে এবং সঠিক তথ্য পেতে পারে।
- পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজ এবং তার সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত প্রচলিত ধারণাগুলি সম্বন্ধে খোলাখুলি আলোচনা করুন যাতে ছাত্ররা সঠিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী গড়ে তুলতে পারে এবং ব্যক্তিত্বের পরিপূর্ণ বিকাশ হয়।
- একজন পুরুষ ও মহিলা কিভাবে দায়িত্বশীল নাগরিক হয়ে উঠতে পারে সে বিষয়েও উদাহরণস্বরূপ আলোচনা করতে পারেন। ে
- ছাত্রদের জীবন দক্ষতাগুলি গড়ে তুলতে সহায়তা করুন।
- বিতর্ক সভার আয়োজন করতে পারেন। প্রয়োজনে অতিথি বক্তার সাহায্যেও এরূপ সভাকে সমৃদ্ধ করতে পারেন। এরূপ সভায় ছাত্রছাত্রীরা অনেক বেশী উৎসাহের সঙ্গে যোগদান করে এবং মতের আদানপ্রদান করে।

মনে রাখতে হবে **Adolescence Education** প্রয়োজন কেবলমাত্র বয়ঃসন্ধিকালীন শিক্ষার্থীদের সঠিক পথে সুষ্ঠুভাবে পরিচালনার জন্য নয়। লিঙ্গবৈষম্যের যে ধারা সমাজিকীকরণের মধ্য দিয়ে ছোট ছোট ছেলেমেয়েরা অন্তঃস্থ করে সচেতন বা অবচেতন মনে বয়ঃসন্ধিকালই হল এই ধারণাগুলির যৌক্তিকতা বিচার করার উপযুক্ত সময়।

ছেলে-মেয়ের দৈহিক ও গঠনগত পার্থক্য কেবলমাত্রই প্রাকৃতিক কিন্তু সামাজিক বৈষম্য এই প্রাকৃতিক পার্থক্যকে কাজে লাগিয়েই গড়ে তোলা হয়েছে — ইহা কতটা যুক্তিযুক্ত ? এ সম্বন্ধে সঠিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী ও মনোভাব গড়ে তোলার এটাই হল উপযুক্ত সময়। আর শিক্ষক শিক্ষিকারাই হলেন তাদের **Role Model** । তাঁদের আদর্শেই উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়ে আজকের কিশোর কিশোরীরা গড়ে তুলবে ভবিষ্যতের বৈষম্যহীন সমাজ।

সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযান
ও
বালিকা শিক্ষা

সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের লক্ষ্য :-

- ❑ ২০০৩ সালের মধ্যে ৫ - ১৪ বছর বয়সি প্রতিটি শিশুকে বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি করা।
- ❑ ২০০৬ সালের মধ্যে প্রতিটি শিশুর চার বছরের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা (প্রথম শ্রেণী থেকে চতূর্থ শ্রেণী) সুনিশ্চিত করা।
- ❑ ২০১০ সালের মধ্যে প্রতিটি শিশুর ৮ বছরের প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা (প্রথম শ্রেণী থেকে অষ্টম শ্রেণী) সুনিশ্চিত করা।
- ❑ জীবনের উপযোগী ও গুনমানের শিক্ষার উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা।
- ❑ ২০০৬ সালের মধ্যে প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে এবং ২০১০ সালের মধ্যে প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গা বৈষম্য সহ নানাবিধ সামাজিক ব্যবধান নিরসন করা।
- ❑ ২০১০ সালের মধ্যে ৫ থেকে ১৮ বছর বয়সি সকল শিশুকে 'বিদ্যালয়ে ধরে রাখা ' সুনিশ্চিত করা।

সমগ্র রাজ্যব্যাপী এই বিশাল কর্মকান্ডকে গতিদান করতে গঠিত হয়েছে রাজ্য প্রকল্প দপ্তর, রাজ্য পর্যায়ের টাস্কফোর্স, জেলা প্রকল্প দপ্তর, গ্রাম শিক্ষা কমিটি (VEC), ওয়ার্ড শিক্ষা কমিটি (WEC) , জেলা অবর পরিদর্শকের(প্রাইমারি) চক্র দপ্তর, গুচ্ছ সম্পদ কেন্দ্র ইত্যাদি। মাননীয় মূখ্যমন্ত্রীর সভাপতিত্বে এই সংস্থাগুলির পারস্পারিক সহযোগিতায় সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযান তার লক্ষ্য পূরণে অনেকাংশে সফল।

সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের একটি বলিষ্ঠতম পদক্ষেপ হল বালিকা শিক্ষার সুযোগ সম্প্রসারণ এবং শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে লিঙ্গা-বৈষম্য দূরীকরণ। বাবা-মার সচেতনতার অভাব, মেয়েদের প্রতি বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ, আর্থিক দূর্বলতা, ছোট ছোট ভাই-বোনেদের দোখাশুনার দায়িত্ব, শিশুশ্রমিক হিসাবে নিয়ুক্তি, রক্ষণশীল মনোভাব, বাল্যবিবাহ, পৃথক শৌচাগারের অভাব, নিরাপত্তার অভাববোধ, স্থানীয়/আঞ্চলিক সমস্যা, ভৌগলিক দূরত্ব ইত্যাদি বহু কারণে ভারতবর্ষ তথা পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মেয়েরা এখনও শিক্ষার সুযোগ থেকে বঞ্চিত।

বালিকা শিক্ষার সম্প্রসারণে সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের পদক্ষেপ :-

ক) নীতি ও সহযোগীতন্ত্র :-

— ৫-১৪ বছর বয়সী মেয়েদের সার্বজনীন প্রারম্ভিক অবৈতনিক শিক্ষা
— চতুর্থ শ্রেণি পর্যন্ত পাশ-ফেল প্রথা তুলে দেওয়া
— প্রতিটি জেলায় নারী-শিক্ষার বিষয়টি পর্যবেক্ষণের জন্য নারী শিক্ষা সমন্বায়ক নিযুক্ত করা

খ) জনগণের সক্রিয়করণের মাধ্যমে তাদের সহযোগিতা লাভঃ

— মীনা প্রদর্শনীর আয়োজন বিদ্যালয়/চক্রসম্পদ স্তরে
— মা ও মেয়ে মেলার আয়োজন বিশেযতঃ পিছিয়ে পড়া এলাকাগুলিতে
— VEC/WEC সদস্যদের বিশেষ করে মহিলা সদস্যাদের নারী শিক্ষা বিষয়ে প্রশিক্ষণ দান

— স্ব-নির্ভর দলের মহিলাদের প্রশিক্ষণ দান
— স্কুল-বহির্ভূত মেয়েদের জন্য বিশেষ ভর্তিকরণ কর্মসূচী
— মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠন এবং ভূমিকা পালনে সহায়তার জন্য সদস্যাদের প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান

গ) বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষক ও বিদ্যালয় পরিবেশ :

— শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকাদের জন্য বালিকা শিক্ষা প্রশিক্ষণ কর্মসূচী
— মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতির সঙ্গে সংযোগ রক্ষা
— পাঠ্য পুস্তকের বৈষম্যমূলক দিকগুলির বিশ্লেষণ ও সংশোধনের সুপারিশ
— পাঠক্রমের আদান প্রদানকালে শিক্ষক শিক্ষিকার প্রত্যাশিত আচরণ সমূহের প্রস্তাব

ঘ) উৎসাহ প্রদান ও সহযোগী পরিষেবা :

— মিড-ডে মিলের ব্যবস্থা
— বিনামূল্যে পাঠ্যপুস্তক সরবরাহ
— প্রাক্ প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা কর্মসূচীর মাধ্যমে ছোট শিশুদের রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ
— পানীয় জল এবং মেয়েদের পৃথক শৌচাগারের ব্যবস্থা
— বিকল্প শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার সুবিধা
— সংশোধনমূলক শিক্ষণ
— মেয়েদের জন্য স্বাস্থ্যপরীক্ষার ব্যবস্থা

এছাড়া নারী শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে পিছিয়ে পড়া ব্লকগুলিতে **NPEGEL** বা বালিকাদের প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা সুনিশ্চিতকরণের লক্ষ্যে জাতীয় কার্যক্রম এবং কস্তুরবা গান্ধী আবাসিক বালিকা বিদ্যালয় (**KGBV**) গড়ে তোলা হয়েছে।

<u>উদিতা (**NPEGEL**) কর্মসূচীঃ-</u>

৫-১৪ বছর বয়সী পিছিয়ে পড়া মেয়েদের অতিরিক্ত কিছু সুযোগ সুবিধা দিয়ে তাদের গুনগত মানের শিক্ষা সুনিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে এই কর্মসূচী চালু করা হয়েছে ২০০৪ - ০৫ সালে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের ১১টি জেলার ৫৯টি ব্লকে। এই কর্মসূচী প্রযোজ্য হবে—

১) ২০০১ সালের সেনসাস রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী যে সমস্ত ব্লকের গ্রামীন এলাকায় নারী শিক্ষার হার জাতীয় স্তরে নারী শিক্ষার হারের (৪৬.৫৮%) চেয়ে কম ।
২) জেলার যে সমস্ত ব্লকে গ্রামীন এলাকায় নারী ও পুরুষের শিক্ষার হারের পার্থক্য জাতীয় স্তরে এই হারের (২১.৭%) চেয়ে বেশি।
৩) জেলার যে সমস্ত ব্লক অন্ততঃ ৫% তপশিলী জাতি / তপশিলী উপজাতি অধ্যুষিত এবং যেখানে নারী শিক্ষার হার ১০ শতাংশের কম।

এই কার্যক্রমে সুযোগ-সুবিধা দেওয়া হচ্ছে -

প্রতিটি গুচ্ছ সম্পদ কেন্দ্রের আওতাভুক্ত প্রাথমিক ও উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলির মধ্যে যে কোনো একটি বিদ্যালয়ে গড়ে তোলা হবে বালিকাদের উপযোগী গুচ্ছ সম্পদ বিদ্যালয় (Cluster Resource School for Girls) যা উদিতা সম্পদ কেন্দ্র (NPEGEL) হিসাবে চিহ্নিত হতে পারেঃ

❖ সংশ্লিষ্ট গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েতের এলাকাভুক্ত যে বিদ্যালয় মেয়েদের অংশগ্রহণ ও শিক্ষার গুনগত মানের দিক থেকে অন্যান্য বিদ্যালয়ের তুলনায় এগিয়ে আছে।

❖ যে বিদ্যালয়ে নিকটবর্তী অন্ততঃ ৫-১০ টি গ্রামের কেন্দ্রস্থলে অবস্থিত।

❖ যে বিদ্যালয়ে অন্ততঃ ৪টি শ্রেণিকক্ষ (প্রাথমিকের ক্ষেত্রে ৩টি), মেয়েদের জন্য পৃথক শৌচাগার, পানীয় জল ও বিদ্যুতের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।

❖ এক্ষেত্রে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক ও মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলিকেই (Girls and Coeducational Junior High and High Schools) অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে। তবে যে গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েতে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় নেই সেখানে উপযুক্ত পরিকাঠামো সম্পন্ন কোন প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়কেও গুচ্ছ সম্পদ বিদ্যালয় হিসাবে চিহ্নিত করা যেতে পারে। সরকার স্বীকৃত ঐ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে বালক ও বালিকা উভয়েরই পঠন-পাঠনের সুযোগ থাকতে হবে

বালিকাদের উপযোগী গুচ্ছ সম্পদ বিদ্যালয়ে কী কী সুযোগ সুবিধা থাকবে —

❖ শৌচাগার, পানীয় জল ও বিদ্যুতের ব্যবস্থা সহ একটি সম্পদ কেন্দ্র তৈরী করা হবে।

❖ পঠন-পাঠন, খেলাধুলা ও কর্মদক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির উপযোগী ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত করার জন্য অর্থের ব্যবস্থাপনা আছে। এই অর্থের সাহায্যে যা যা করা যেতে পারে তা হলঃ

- গ্রন্থাগার গড়ে তোলা
- কম্পিউটার /ফিল্ম শো-র মাধ্যমে শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা
- খেলার মাঠ প্রস্তুত করা (বাস্কেট বল, ভলিবল কোর্ট, ইত্যাদি)
- খেলাধূলা সাজ-সরঞ্জাম কেনা
- জীবনমুখী ও কর্মশিক্ষার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সরঞ্জাম কেনা, যেমন সেলাই, প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসার জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সরঞ্জাম ইত্যাদি।

পরবর্তীকালে উদিতা সম্পদকেন্দ্র (NPEGEL) হয়ে উঠবে ঐ এলাকার বালিকা শিক্ষার প্রাণকেন্দ্র। সংশ্লিষ্ট গুচ্ছের অন্যান্য বিদ্যালয় / পরিপূরক বিদ্যালয়ের ৫-১৪ বছর বয়সি মেয়েরা বিভিন্ন শিক্ষা গ্রহণ এবং অভিজ্ঞতা বিনিময়ের জন্য নিয়মিতভাবে এই কেন্দ্রে আসবে। বিভিন্ন ধরনের ক্রীড়া, বিনোদন, শিক্ষামূলক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রতিযোগিতা অনুষ্ঠিত হতে পারে এই কেন্দ্রে।

<u>কস্তুরবা গান্ধী বালিকা বিদ্যালয়ঃ</u>

শিক্ষাগত দিক থেকে পিছিয়ে পড়া ব্লকগুলিতে কস্তুরবা গান্ধী আবাসিক বালিক বিদ্যালয় নির্মাণ হবে। এই ছাত্রী নিবাসগুলিতে মূলতঃ তপশিল জাতি/উপজাতি ও সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়ের এবং দারিদ্রসীমার নীচে বসবাসকারী পরিবারের বালিকারা থাকার সুযোগ পাবে এই দলভুক্ত বালিকারা হল — ১) উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তরের স্কুলছুট্ ২) অনিয়মিত শিশু ৩) পরপর দু-বছর অনুর্ত্তীন হওয়া ৪) দূরত্বজনিত এবং প্রাকৃতিক বাধাজনিত কারণে আসতে না পারা / ছড়িয়ে ছিটিয়ে থাকা জনবসতিতে বসবাসকারী। যে সমস্ত বালিকারা এই বিদ্যালয়ে থেকে পড়াশুনা করবে তাদের আহার, পোশাক, পড়াশুনার আনুসজ্ঞিক খরচ ও ৫০ টাকা প্রতি মাসে অনুদানে দেওয়া হবে।

উচ্চপ্রাথমিকস্তরে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের রূপরেখা :

শিশুর শিক্ষাগ্রহণ, বালিকা শিক্ষার সুনিশ্চিতকরণ এবং গুণগতমানের শিক্ষালাভের ক্ষেত্রে মায়ের অপরিসীম ভূমিকাকে স্বীকৃতি দিয়ে গড়ে উঠেছে **মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি** পশ্চিমবঙ্গের সকল রাজ্যের প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলিতে। শিশুর শিক্ষায় মায়েদের নজরদারি ও তদারকি বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষার কাজকেও তরান্বিত করেছে। তাদের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ মতামত ও দলগত হস্তক্ষেপ সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের মূল চারটি লক্ষ্যের বাস্তবায়ণে সহায়তা করেছে এবং করে চলেছে।

এই সাফল্যের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক স্তরে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠন করার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহন করা হয়েছে। বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষা বিভাগ (প্রাথমিক শাখা), বিকাশ ভবন, এর সহসচিব মহাশয়ের স্বাক্ষরিত নিম্নলিখিত নির্দেশিকাটি মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের রূপরেখা হিসাবে বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষা বিভাগ অধিকর্তা, বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শক এবং সমস্ত বিদ্যালয়গুলিতে প্রেরণ করা হয়েছে।

পটভূমিঃ

শিক্ষা একটি সামাজিক প্রক্রিয়া। এই প্রক্রিয়ার সুষ্ঠ পরিচালনার জন্য শিক্ষালয় এর আবির্ভাব ঘটেছে। বিদ্যালয়ের কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে সমাজের ভবিষ্যত নাগরিকদের প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হয়। অর্থাৎ বিদ্যালয়ের দায়িত্ব হল সুনাগরিক গঠন করা। অন্যদিকে সমাজের কর্তব্য হল বিদ্যালয়গুলি যাতে সমাজের প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী প্রশিক্ষণদানের ব্যবস্থা করে, সমাজের প্রতিটি শিশু যাতে প্রতিষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষার সুযোগ পেতে পারে, সে দিকে লক্ষ্য রাখা। অর্থাৎ শিক্ষালয় ও সমাজ উভয়ের স্বার্থেই পরস্পরের সম্পর্কের উন্নতি করা দরকার। শিক্ষার পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব প্রাপ্ত সংস্থা হিসাবে এই পারস্পরিক সম্পর্ক স্থাপনের ব্যাপারে বিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষকে সক্রিয় ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করতে হবে।

আমাদের দেশে প্রাথমিক ও প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা সুষ্ঠুভাবে পরিচালনা করার জন্য ও শিক্ষার মান উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে নিরন্তরভাবে কাজ করে চলেছেন বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষা বিভাগ। এদের এই কাজে সহযোগিতা করছেন পঞ্চায়েত দপ্তর, সমাজকল্যাণ দপ্তর সহ অন্যান্য সরকারি দপ্তরের আধিকারিকগণ এবং জনপ্রতিনিধিবৃন্দ। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার দেখভাল করার জন্য ক্ষমতা বিকেন্দ্রীকরণের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রতিটি সংসদে তৈরী হয়েছে গ্রাম শিক্ষা কমিটি। সরকারীভাবে স্বীকৃত এই কমিটিকে ভিত্তি করে বিদ্যালয়ের উন্নয়নের কাজে জনসাধারণকে যুক্ত করা সম্ভবপর হয়েছে সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযান কর্মসূচির অন্তর্গত জেলাগুলিতে। উচ্চ প্রাথমিক এবং মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চতর মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলির প্রশাসনিক কাঠামো একটু স্বতন্ত্র এবং জটিলও বটে। এই প্রশাসনিক কাঠামোটি অত্যন্ত সুসংবন্ধ ও বিভিন্ন স্তরে বিভক্ত।

পশ্চিমবঙ্গ মধ্যশিক্ষা পর্ষদের নির্দেশ অনুযায়ী (West Bengal Board of Secondary Education Act. 1963) প্রত্যেক মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়ের পরিচালনার দায়িত্বে রয়েছে একটি সমিতি। বিদ্যালয় পরিচালনায় যাতে প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীর ব্যক্তির স্বার্থ রক্ষিত হয় সেই উদ্দেশ্যে এই সমিতিকে প্রতিনিধি স্থানীয় করার ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে। বিদ্যালয় পরিচালন সমিতির কার্যাবলী পর্য্যালোচনা করলে দেখা যায় যে একটি বিদ্যালয়ের সার্বিক উন্নয়নের দায়িত্ব এই সমিতির উপর আরোপ করা হয়েছে ঠিকই কিন্তু গণসংযোগ মূলক বিষয়টির উপর বিশেষ আলোকপাত করা হয়নি। বিদ্যালয় সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার প্রতিটি শিশু প্রাথমিক স্তরের শিক্ষা লাভের পর উচ্চতর প্রাথমিক স্তরে শিক্ষার সুযোগ পাচ্ছে কিনা, তাদের শিক্ষার গুণগত মান উন্নয়ন হচ্ছে কিনা ইত্যাদি বিষয়গুলি পরিচালন সমিতি সুনিশ্চিত করে না। **তাই পরিচালন সমিতির সহায়ক হিসাবে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠন করার প্রয়োজন আছে।**

মাতা - শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রয়োজনীয়তা ঃ-

একজন শিশুর জন্মলগ্নের পর থেকেই তার প্রথম শিক্ষাদাত্রী হয় তার মা, এরপর প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার আওতায় যখন সে আসে তখন শিক্ষক এই দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করেন। একজন শিশুর দৈনন্দিন জীবনযাত্রার খুঁটিনাটি বিষয়ে তদারকি করা একমাত্র তার মায়ের পক্ষেই সম্ভবপর। শিক্ষার্থীরা খুব অল্প সময়ের জন্য বিদ্যালয়ে থাকে। এই সময়ের মধ্যে শিক্ষকরা তাদের জীবনবিকশে তথা সামাজিকীকরণে সহায়তা করেন। কিন্তু বিদ্যালয়ে যে চারিত্রিক আদর্শগুলি বিকাশ করার চেষ্টা করা হয় সেগুলি অনুশীলনের ক্ষেত্র হল বৃহত্তর জীবন পরিবেশ। এই পরিবেশে শিক্ষার্থীরা দিনের বেশীর ভাগ সময় ব্যয় করে। যে আদর্শ ও চারিত্রিক বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি শিক্ষকগণ কর্তৃক বিদ্যালয়ে বিকাশের চেষ্টা করা হয়, সেগুলি যদি গৃহপরিবেশে অভিভাবকগণ চর্চার সুযোগ না দেন, তাহলে বিদ্যালয়ের সম্পূর্ণ চেষ্টা ব্যর্থ হবে। তাই অভিভাবক - শিক্ষক সম্পর্কের মাধ্যমে তাদের কাজ ও দায়িত্বের মধ্যে সমন্বয় সাধন করতে হবে। এই সমন্বয়িত প্রচেষ্টায় শিক্ষার্থীর জীবনবিকাশের ধারা তরান্বিত হবে। এই ধারণার উপর ভিত্তি করেই মাতা - শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠন করার পরিকল্পনা গৃহীত হয়েছে। এই সমিতি এমন একটি মঞ্চ যেখানে মায়েরা একত্রিত হতে পারেন, পরস্পরের সঙ্গে মত বিনিময় করতে পারেন এবং ধীরে ধীরে নিজ নিজ এলাকার পরিচালন সমিতির সঙ্গে নিয়মিত ভাবে সংযোগ রেখে উন্নয়নে সামিল হতে পারেন।

মনে রাখতে হবে বিদ্যালয় হল একটি সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠান। শিক্ষর্থীর সর্বাঙ্গীনবিকাশের দায়িত্ব বহন করে এই প্রতিষ্ঠান। শিক্ষক এই দায়িত্ব কি ভাবে পালন করবেন. তার উপর নির্ভর করবে বিদ্যালয়ের উপযোগিতা। এখন এই দয়িত্ব পালন করতে গিয়ে শিক্ষকের কি কি অসুবিধা হচ্ছে.কি ধরনের ব্যবস্থা তিনি গ্রহণ করছেন, এ সম্পর্কে অভিভাবকদের সঠিক ধারণা না থাকার জন্য, তারা অনেক সময় ভ্রান্ত ধারণার বশবর্তী হয়ে বিদ্যালয়ের উপর দোষারোপ করেন। এতে পরস্পরের মধ্যে ভূল বোঝাবুঝি হয় এবং তার প্রভাব শিক্ষার্থীদের উপর এসে পড়ে, তাই মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি স্থাপিত হলে শিক্ষকগণ অনেক বেশী নিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে তাঁদের দায়িত্ব পালন করতে পারবেন।

মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতি একটি **Social Pressure Group** বা **প্রভাববিস্তারকারী সামাজিক দল** হিসাবে তাঁর দায়িত্ব পালন করবে।

মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতি যদি এলাকার শিক্ষা সংক্রান্ত সমস্যাগুলি সমাধান করতে গিয়ে বিদ্যালয় পরিচালন সমিতিকে সহায়তা করেন এবং এই সমিতি যদি পারস্পরিক আলোচনার মাধ্যমে তাঁদের কার্য পরিচালনা করেন তাহলে বিদ্যালয়ের তথা এলাকার সামগ্রিক উন্নয়ন সম্ভবপর। এর সাথে সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের প্রকৃত উদ্দেশ্য — ৫^+ - ১৩^+ বছর বয়সী সকল শিশুকে কাম্য মানের শিক্ষাদান করা — সাধিত হবে।

মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতিতে কারা থাকবেনঃ-

এই সমিতি প্রাথমিকভাবে গঠিত হতে পারে উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের সমস্ত শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকা, পঞ্চম থেকে অষ্টম শ্রেণীতে পাঠরত সকল ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের মায়েদের নিয়ে। তবে এর কার্যকরী দলে বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিটি শ্রেণীর মায়েদের প্রতিনিধিত্ব থাকা প্রয়োজন। মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতির কার্যকরী দলের সদস্যরা হবেন -

১। প্রধান শিক্ষক / শিক্ষিকা	সভাপতি ও আহ্বায়ক
২। অ্যাকাডেমিক কাউন্সিল সম্পাদক	সদস্য
৩। টিচার্স / স্টাফ কাউন্সিল সম্পাদক	সদস্য

৪। পরিচালন সমিতির বয়ঃজ্যেষ্ঠ শিক্ষক প্রতিনিধি — সদস্য

৫। বিদ্যালয়ের বয়ঃজ্যেষ্ঠ শিক্ষিকা (যদি থাকে) — সদস্যা

৬। প্রতিটি শ্রেণী থেকে কমপক্ষে ২ জন মহিলা অভিভাবক, যাদের মধ্যে ন্যূনতম ১ জন যথাক্রমে তপঃজাতি, তপঃউপজাতি, অনগ্রসর শ্রেণী, সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায় ও বিশেষ চাহিদা-প্রাপ্ত শিশুর মা হওয়া আবশ্যিক। এটি random পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করবে অর্থাৎ কোনো শ্রেণী কক্ষে যদি মোট ৩০ জন শিক্ষার্থী থাকে, তাহলে প্রথমবার প্রথম শিক্ষার্থীর মা ও ৩০-তম শিক্ষার্থীর মা-কে নির্বাচন করা হবে। দ্বিতীয়বারে দ্বিতীয় শিক্ষার্থীর মা ও ২৯-তম শিক্ষার্থীর মা নির্বাচিত হবেন। — সদস্যা

৭। সহকারি বিদ্যলয় পরিদর্শক — সদস্য

৮। জেলার জেন্ডার কো-অর্ডিনেটর দ্বারা মনোনীত একজন মহিলা — সদস্যা

মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রক্রিয়া ঃ-

১) মাতা শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রক্রিয়া, এই সমিতির দায়িত্ব ও সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার উন্নয়নে এর ভূমিকা প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে প্রতি জেলা থেকে ৪ - ৫ জন প্রশিক্ষক রাজ্যস্তরে প্রশিক্ষিত হবেন। প্রশিক্ষক দলে থাকবেন রাজ্য নারী শিক্ষার সংযোজক, রাজ্য সম্পন্ন দলের ব্যক্তিগণ **(State Resource Group member)**

২) তাঁরা জেলাস্তরের সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিদের এই বিষয়গুলির উপর প্রশিক্ষণ দেবেন।

৩) এই সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিরা সরাসরি বিদ্যালয়ে গিয়ে পরিচালন সমিতির সঙ্গে সংযোগ রেখে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রক্রিয়ায় সক্রিয় অংশ নেবেন।

- জেলা থেকে যে ৪-৬ ব্যক্তি রাজ্যস্তরে প্রশিক্ষিত হবেন তারা হতে পারেন সাব ডিভিশনল ওয়ার্কিং দলের সদস্য / পরিচালন সমিতির সদস্য / অতিরিক্ত বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শক (উচ্চ প্রাথমিক) / উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকা / সম্পন্ন শিক্ষক (উচ্চ প্রাথমিক)
- উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক -শিক্ষিকাগণ জেলাস্তরের সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তি হিসাবে নিযুক্ত হতে পারেন ।

৪) সর্বশিক্ষা অভিযানের জেলা প্রকল্প দপ্তর বিদ্যালয়ভিত্তিক মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রক্রিয়ার রুপরেখা সহ এই সমিতি গঠনের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় নির্দেশাবলী পাঠাতে পারেন জেলা পরিদর্শকের অফিসে

৫) জেলা পরিদর্শক তাঁর জেলা অধীনস্থ চক্রগুলির চক্র প্রকল্প সংযোজক এবং ওই চক্রের অন্তর্গত উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের পরিচালন সমিতির নিকট প্রয়োজনীয় নির্দেশাবলী পঠাতে পারেন যাতে তাঁরা সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিদের সহযোগিতা করে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের প্রস্তুতি নিতে পারেন।

৬) প্রতি চক্র প্রকল্প কেন্দ্রের অন্তর্গত সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিরা এবং উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের পরিচালন সমিতির সদস্যরা স্থির করবেন ঐ চক্রের কোন বিদ্যালয়ে কবে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠিত হবে।

৭) পরিচালন সমিতির সদস্যরা তদের সংশ্লিষ্ট বিদ্যালয়ে মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি গঠনের নিদিষ্ট দিনটি জানিয়ে দিতে পারেন।

৮) ঐ নির্দিষ্ট তারিখে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিদ্যালয়ে পাঠরত সমস্ত শিশুর মায়েরা / অভিভাবকরা যেন বিদ্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণে উপস্থিত থাকেন সে বিষয়ে প্রধান শিক্ষককে উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে।

৯) মায়েরা ছাড়া উপস্থিত থাকবেন পরিচালন সমিতির সদস্যরা, সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিরা, চক্র প্রকল্প সংযোজক, সম্পন্ন শিক্ষকরা।

১০) সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিরা সভা শুরুর আগে এলাকার শিক্ষা সংক্রান্ত সমস্যাগুলি সম্পর্কে তথ্য সংগ্রহ করবেন।

১১) তারা মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতির গঠনের প্রয়োজনীয়তা এবং এর কার্যাবলী সম্বন্ধে বিশদে আলোচনা করবেন।

১২) পরিশেষে মায়েদের সকলের মতামত নিয়ে তাদের মধ্যে থেকেই বিভিন্ন প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে ৫— ৬ জনের একটি কার্যকরী দল গঠন করা যেতে পারে। যারা এই দলের সদস্য হবেন তাদের নাম মায়েদের থেকে উঠে আসাই বাঞ্ছনীয়। তবে পরিচালন সমিতির সদস্য / বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষকরা এই বিষয়ে সহযোগিতা করতে পারেন।

মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতির কার্যকরী কমিটির কাজ কি কি হতে পারে ?

১) যে সব শিশুরা প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার কাল সম্পূর্ণ করেছে তারা যেন উচ্চ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হয় সে বিষয়ে নজর রাখা।

২) যে সব শিশুরা পঞ্চম শ্রেণীতে ভর্তি হচ্ছে না, সেই সব শিশুরা পরিবারের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করা, বিশেষ করে শিশুর মাকে বোঝানো কারণ একমাত্র মা-ই পারে আরেক মাকে ঠিকমতো বোঝাতে।

৩) যে সব শিশুরা মাঝপথে পড়া ছেড়ে দিয়েছে তাদের বাড়ী গিয়ে অভিভাবকদের বোঝানো যাতে শিশুরা বিদ্যালয়ে ছুট না হয়ে যায়।

৪) মেয়েদের শিক্ষার প্রয়োজনীয়তা সর্ম্পকে মায়েদের বোঝানো। এলাকায় মেয়েদের শিক্ষার পরিবেশ তৈরী করতে সহায়তা করা।

৫) পরিচালন সমিতির সঙ্গে সংযোগ রক্ষা করা ও তাদের বিভিন্ন কাজে সাহায্য দান।

৬) আংশিক প্রতিবন্ধী শিশুদের প্রতি বিশেষ নজর দেওয়া, বিদ্যালয়ের অন্য ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের সঙ্গে একই সঙ্গে পড়াশোনার বিশেষ সুযোগের ব্যবস্থা করা।

৭) বিদ্যালয়ের পঠন-পাঠনের মানোন্নয়নে বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকাদের সঙ্গে ধারাবাহিক আলাপ আলোচনা করা এবং এ বিষয়ে মায়েদের কি ধরণের সহায়তা প্রয়োজন তা জানা ও দেওয়া।

৮) বিদ্যালয় স্বাস্থ্য কর্মসূচীতে সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশ নেওয়া এবং বিদ্যালয়টিকে স্বাস্থ্য সচেতন বিদ্যালয় রূপে গড়ে তোলা।

৯) বিদ্যালয়ের সার্বিক পরিবেশ শিক্ষা সহায়ক করে তুলতে গঠনমূলক সহযোগিতা করা।

১০) বিশেষ বিশেষ দিবসগুলি এবং অন্যান্য শিক্ষা ও সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানগুলি সঠিকভাবে উদযাপনে সহায়তা করা।

১১) বয়ঃসন্ধিকালের দেহমনের পরিবর্তনগুলি অভিভাবকদের বিশেষ চিন্তার উদ্রেক করে। তাই কিশোর-কিশোরীদের বিভিন্ন সমস্যা নিয়ে সমিতির সদস্যরা বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকাদের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করবেন।

১২) বিদ্যালয় শিক্ষকের পর্যাপ্ততা দেখা

১৩) বিষয় ভিত্তিক শিক্ষকদের ছাত্রছাত্রীদের প্রতি মনোভাব এবং আচরণ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা

১৪) সামাজিক যেসকল প্রথা কিশোরীদের শিক্ষালাভের পথে অন্তরায়স্বরূপ সেই সকল প্রতিবন্ধকতা দূর করতে প্রয়াসী হওয়া

১৫) শিক্ষার্থীদের মূল্যায়ণের ফলাফল নিয়ে আলোচনা

মাতা-শিক্ষক সমিতি কখনই পরিচালন সমিতির এক্তিয়ারে হস্তক্ষেপ করবে না কেবল মাত্র একটি সহযোগী সমিতি হিসাবে কাজ করবে।

শিশুর শিক্ষার গুনগত মানোন্নয়নে মায়েদের ভূমিকা ঃ-

"যাদের মা শিক্ষিতা ও নীতিপরায়ণা হন, তাদের ঘরেই মহৎ লোক জন্মায়। ...... মেয়েদের আগে তুলতে হবে, আপামর জনসাধারণকে জাগাতে হবে, তবে তো দেশের কল্যাণ।"

গৃহ পরিবেশের দৈনন্দিন কার্যাকলাপে ভারাক্রান্ত মায়েরা অনেক সময় শিশু বিদ্যালয়ে গুণগত মানের শিক্ষা পাচ্ছে কিনা সে বিষয়ে কিছুটা উদাসীন থাকেন। বিশেষতঃ দরিদ্র, অনগ্রসর শ্রেণীর মায়েরা প্রথাগত শিক্ষার গুরুত্ব সম্বন্ধেও ওয়াকিবহাল থাকেন না। বহুক্ষেত্রে অর্থনৈতিক দুরবস্থার কারণে শিশুকে দিয়ে ঘরকন্নার কাজ বা সাংসারিক অন্যান্য কাজ করানো হয়। আর নিরক্ষর, স্বল্প শিক্ষিত মায়েরা স্বল্পজ্ঞানের দরুণ তাদের শিশুরা যথাযথ মানের শিক্ষা পাচ্ছে কিনা তা দেখাশোনা করতে অপারগ হন। আর উচ্চ-প্রাথমিক স্তরের শিক্ষার জটিলতা অনেক বেশী। নতুন বিষয়ের সমাগম এবং বিষয়ের কাঠিন্যের দরুণ তারা শিশুদের শিক্ষার ভার গৃহ শিক্ষকের উপর ন্যস্ত করেন। এছাড়া অভিভাবকদের সঙ্গো অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই শিক্ষকের কোন যোগাযোগ থাকে না। এই দূরত্বের দরুণ শিশুদের শিক্ষার অগ্রগতি সম্পর্কে অভিভাবকেরা অজ্ঞ থেকে যায় এবং শিক্ষকের সঙ্গো আলোচনাতেও তারা ইতঃস্তত বোধ করেন। তবে একটি শিশুর গুণগত মানের শিক্ষালাভের ক্ষেত্রে মায়ের যে অপরিসীম ভূমিকা রয়েছে, তা বোঝানোর জন্য শিক্ষক শিক্ষিকাগণ নিম্নলিখিত বিষয়গুলি তাদের বলতে পারেন -

১) বিদ্যালয় হল নিয়মানুবর্তিতার প্রতীক এবং শৃঙ্খলাবোধ গড়ে তোলার ক্ষেত্র। বিদ্যালয়ে শৃঙ্খলা স্থাপনের মূল উদ্দেশ্য হল শিক্ষার্থীদের আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণের ক্ষমতার বিকাশসাধন করা এবং সামাজিক বিকাশের উপযোগী যথাযোগ্য মনোভাব ও অভ্যাস গঠন করা। তাই মায়েরা খেয়াল রাখবেন যাতে শিশুরা সঠিক সময়ে বিদ্যালয়ে যায় এবং সন্ধ্যায় নিয়মমত ফিরে আসে।

২) তিনি খেয়াল রাখবেন তার শিশু যেন নিয়মিত বিদ্যালয়ে যায়। অনাবশ্যক কারণে যেন অনুপস্থিত না থাকে। কারণ বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষণ প্রক্রিয়া একটি ধারাবাহিকতা বজায় রাখে। এই ধারাবাহিকতায় ছেদ পড়লে শিশুদের পাঠের ছন্দপতন হয়, বোধগম্যতার স্তরে খামতি দেখা দেয় এবং তার ফলে বিদ্যালয়ের পাঠে ভীতির সঞ্চার হয় ফলে বিদ্যালয় ছুট্ হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা দেখা যায়।

৩) শিশু প্রতিদিন বিদ্যালয় থেকে বাড়ী ফিরলে সারাদিন বিদ্যালয়ে কি হল সে বিষয়ে জিজ্ঞাসা করা দরকার। এর ফলে দৈনন্দিন বিদ্যালয়ের কার্যকলাপ সম্বন্ধে মায়েরা অবগত থাকবেন। তাছাড়া শিশুরা বিদ্যালয়ের পাঠে কতটা সক্রিয়ভাবে মনোযোগ দেয় তা জানা যায়। এছাড়া তাদের আলোচনা থেকে কোন বিশেষ বিষয়ের প্রতি তাদের আগ্রহ আছে সে সম্বন্ধে একটা ধারণা জন্মায়।

৪) শিক্ষা ও স্বাস্থ্য অঙ্গাঙ্গীভাবে জড়িত। একদিকে শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য সুস্থ ও পরিপূর্ণভাবে বিকশিত নাগরিক গঠনে সহায়তা করা, অন্যদিকে শিক্ষার জন্য চাই সুস্থ দেহ। তাই শিশুরা যাতে প্রত্যহ স্বাস্থ্যাভ্যাসগুলি অনুশীলন করে, পরিস্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নতা বজায় রাখে সেগুলি খেয়াল রাখাও মায়ের দায়িত্ব।

৫) হঠাৎ বৃদ্ধি এবং শারীরিক ক্রিয়াকলাপের দরুণ বয়ঃসন্ধিকালীন ছেলেমেয়েদের বেশী ক্যালোরিযুক্ত খাদ্যের প্রয়োজন হয়। যথার্থ পুষ্টির অভাব কেবল দৈহিক বৃদ্ধিই ব্যাহত করে না, মানসিক বিকাশও ব্যাহত করে। তাই বিদ্যালয়ে যাওয়ার পূর্বে ছেলেমেয়েরা যাতে পর্যাপ্ত আহার গ্রহণ করে তা খেয়াল রাখবে এবং খাদ্যবন্টনের ক্ষেত্রে ছেলে ও মেয়েদের মধ্যে কোন বৈষম্য বজায় রাখবে না।

৬) মায়েরা খেয়াল রাখবেন শিশুরা প্রতিদিন বিদ্যালয় থেকে ফেরার পর শিক্ষক নির্দেশিত গৃহকাজগুলি ঠিকমত করছে কিনা এবং কাজগুলি সম্পন্ন করতে কোন অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হচ্ছে কিনা।

শিশুদের সাধারণত যে বিষয়গুলির প্রতি আগ্রহ জন্মায় সেগুলি পড়ার প্রবণতা বেশী থাকে, অথচ যে বিষয়গুলিতে দুর্বল সেগুলি চর্চা করে না বা এড়িয়ে চলে। মায়েরা শিশুদের এই প্রবণতাগুলি নজর করলে বিষয়গত দূর্বলতা ও ভীতি কাটিয়ে তাদের সব বিষয়ে আগ্রহী করে তোলা সম্ভবপর হবে।

৭) বয়ঃসন্ধিকালে ছেলেমেয়েদের মধ্যে নিজেকে নিয়ে কিছু সংশয় ও প্রশ্ন জেগে ওঠে। আত্মমর্যাদাবোধ জাগ্রত হয় এবং সামাজিক গ্রহণযোগ্যতার চাহিদা অনুভব করে। তাদের মানসিক চাপমুক্ত করার একমাত্র উপযুক্ত ও নিরাপদ জায়গা হল তার গৃহ পরিবেশ আর তার মা-ই হল পরম বন্ধু — কৌতূহল নিবারণের উৎস। বিশেষতঃ বয়ঃসন্ধিকালীন কিশোরীরা তাদের সহপাঠী বা অন্যান্য ব্যক্তিদের নিকট থেকে অভাবনীয় আচরণ পেলে একমাত্র তার মায়ের কাছেই খোলাখুলি বলতে পারে। তাই গৃহ পরিবেশ যেন হয় খোলামেলা এবং সহযোগিতামূলক।

মায়েদের সচেতনতার মধ্য দিয়েই সমগ্র মনবসমাজের উত্তরণ ঘটবে এবং সকলেই একই বাক্যে বলে উঠবে —

"যথার্থ সুশিক্ষা পাইলে আমাদের মেয়েরা জগতের আদর্শ নারী হইয়া উঠিতে পারিবে।"

Howrah District Map